







# THE GANGES AND THE SEINE.





THE  
GANGES AND THE SEINE:

SCENES ON THE BANKS OF BOTH.

“There is a river in Monmouth, and there is a river in Macedon.”  
*Captain Fluellen.*

BY  
SIDNEY LAMAN BLANCHARD.

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## P R E F A C E

OF the chapters in these volumes which relate to India, the greater number are now published for the first time. The remainder of the general contents, with the exception of a few papers, have appeared in the pages of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.

Two or three papers included in the collection have no especial reference to either the Ganges or the Seine ; but it is hoped that they will not be considered unpardonable intruders upon that account.

The author has only to add, that although many of the incidents recorded in the following pages are written in an autobiographical form, he must not always be considered as their hero, but be understood as sometimes availing himself of a license commonly accorded to writers of either fact or fiction.

*London, October, 1862.*



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# THE GANGES AND THE SEINE.

## I.

### THE CITY OF AKHBAR KHAN.

I ONCE heard a youthful subaltern of the (late) East India Company's army describe the city of Akhbar Khan as the finest place in the world. His reason for arriving at this conclusion was that he had been stationed there for two years, and during that period might have gone to bed intoxicated every night, had he so chosen—such was the amount of festivity then prevalent. Granting the decided advantage of such an opportunity, I am afraid that if the locality possessed no other attractions the perusal of these pages would scarcely repay the reader. Like a great many of our countrymen in a similar position, my friend the subaltern was wont to measure the merits of any place in which he might find himself by the price of beer, and the accessibility of kindred comforts and indulgences. His “primrose by the river's brim” might be a lotus on the banks of the Ganges; it would remain the simple flower, as far as he was concerned, and nothing more would he ever make of it. And, after all, if a man is sent to a place where he may have to stay for years,



without being consulted in the matter, and has to plant himself there under possible difficulties in the shape of a wife and family, he may perhaps be excused for taking a material and unpoetical view of his destiny, and for holding the opinion that a comfortable house, and provisions at reasonable rates, are more important considerations than romantic scenery and historical associations. Even love, if it cannot live on flowers, can scarcely be expected to reside in ruins ; and perhaps there may not be love, but never mind. I am afraid that a great many very fine descriptions of the beauties of nature would never have been written had their authors been stationed among them as officers of a marching regiment, or as officials with distressing desk work and regular promotion. Let us not blame men—nor even women—so placed, for considering even such a locality as the city of Akhbar Khan in the mere light of a “station.”

But for persons who are able or willing to take an interest in matters beyond the ordinary range of garrison gossip and civil service “shop,” there is much to be seen in most places where they are likely to be quartered in India, from which they may derive both pleasure and profit. And if they had their choice of localities they could scarcely make a better selection, as far as scenes and associations are concerned, than the city of whose principal “lions” I am about to attempt a sketch.

The city of Akhbar Khan, otherwise Akhbarabad, better known to Europeans as Agra, is the capital of the province of that name, now merged in the north west provinces of Bengal. Its glories as a capital, however, have been brief. Akhbar Khan made it his head quarters, and made the city, in fact, which so came to be called by his name ; but the previous Mogul emperors

had Delhi for their capital: and there the last titular descendant of Timur held a mimic court, without power, until a certain Sunday night in May, 1857, when the outbreak at Meerut gave him something like real sovereignty. But this was brought to an end in the September of the same year, when Delhi fell, and with it all his hopes. Under British rule Agra was the seat of government of the north-west provinces; but it has lately been abandoned, as a capital, for Allahabad, where the little court of the lieutenant governor is now held.

Those were great days for Agra, in the time of Akhbar. But of the monuments of his reign few remain; and the noblest work of which Agra can now boast was the work of a successor. But the fort, in which is the palace of the great monarch, still stands, and is occupied by a British garrison. It was within its walls that the entire European population of Agra took refuge from the rebels in 1857; and it was from its high ramparts that they saw their bungalows burning in the silent night, with sensations which only those who have stood thus "by their own firesides" can properly appreciate.

To the fort we will direct our first attention. Its exterior is grand and imposing; its walls are of great height, with immense bastions, and it is surrounded, except where it is bathed by the Jumna, by a deep ditch crossed by drawbridges. It has the appearance of considerable strength; but the idea is delusive. The red sandstone, of which it is outwardly composed, is not the most solid of material, and before the mutiny the structure was considered so frail that it was thought imprudent to fire the evening gun from the battlements, lest the repeated shock should weaken its foundations. During the time when the garrison was holding out against an enemy which fortunately never presented

itself, the works were much strengthened, and the defences are now of a very respectable kind; but it would have no chance against a regular siege, with artillery. A very few hours would settle its fate. In the time of Akhbar, however, it was considered equal to any emergency, and very likely was so.

The most beautiful object inside the fort is the Motee Musjid, or Pearl Mosque. It is a white marble edifice built upon a high platform of the prevailing red sandstone. Its three white domes, surmounted by gilded spires, are conspicuous objects seen from afar, when they appear almost as if floating in the sky. Upon nearer view they lose nothing of the effect due to their exquisite grace and proportion. The entrance is reached by a high flight of steps; inside is a quadrangle of white marble; and on the western side is the place of devotion, which is divided into three aisles by rows of Moorish arches. These are of wonderful beauty, both as regards proportion and elaborate ornamentation. Above them are written the following Persian verses :\*

This splendid place, "the second heavenly temple"<sup>†</sup>  
 Of beauty, far surpassing every other ;  
 From whence the sun derives its radiance ;  
 Elevated like the throne of the High God ;  
 Its domes like the highest heavens ;  
 Its beautiful original being in heaven ;  
 Each of its golden spires shining like the candles of the firmament ;

\* For these, as well as for the inscriptions which follow, and for other matter of which I have made free use, I am indebted to a little hand-book printed some years ago at Agra, but which can scarcely be considered as *published* anywhere. It is a compilation from native manuscripts, and contains many facts, or assertions at any rate, which are not to be found in any other form.

† Like the one at Mecca, which is in imitation of the vault of heaven.

Its arches like the full moon's in the Edee ;\*  
 Is situated in the centre of the far-famed  
 Red sandstone fort at Akbarabad,  
 Which is to it, like the halo round the moon.  
 The grace of God always rests upon it ;  
 It is like the palace in heaven, made of one pearl ;†  
 It is built of pure marble from top to bottom ;  
 Another place like this exists not on this earth ;  
 From the beginning of the world, such a place of worship never was  
 seen

As this, which was built by Shah Jehan, who was like  
 Solomon as to wisdom, and as venerable as Abraham,  
 Whose throne is like the one in the heavens.  
 The whole creation came under his protection,  
 And he increased the power of the commands of God, (the source of  
 equity);

The earth before his feet, thinks itself equal to the heavens,  
 And the heavens, seeing his munificence, are suppliant.  
 Wealth and prosperity wish always to be his servants,  
 Religion, seeing his purity, is most friendly to him,  
 The zephyrs of heaven begged the soil before his throne,  
 The fires of hell before the temper of his sword were suppliant ;  
 His kingdom is strong, because he rules, and justice also ;  
 The cup of war is always full from his conquering sword.  
 The heavens are slaves to his beauty,  
 His countenance is as a looking glass for the moon ;  
 He is the north star of the heavens, defender of the faith,  
 Protector of the land, diffuser of justice,  
 Good ruler over his mighty kingdom,  
 This Aboul Mosufur Shahahbodeen,  
 "The second lord of felicity,"

Shah Jehan, the victorious emperor of all the world.  
 The edifice was finished in the twenty-sixth year of his reign ;  
 The Motee Musjid took seven years to complete,  
 And cost thirty laks of rupees, or £300,000.  
 "From the abundance of his good designs,"

\* The Mahomedan Festival of the sacrifice of Abraham, who,  
 according to that creed, was ordered to offer up Ishmael.

† Where all the best of the faithful are supposed to go.

May God grant favor to all who come to pray here,  
May the star of prosperity and salvation  
Shine on his head : so be it,  
Oh God of the universe, "so be it."\*

On either side are fret-work screens, also of white marble, behind which the ladies of the harem were allowed to hear prayers read. It need scarcely be remarked that they were invisible to the devotees, although they could see all that passed themselves. Among a people who consider that no man can be trusted to look at a lady belonging to somebody else, even in the ordinary intercourse of life, it may be supposed that such a distraction when at his prayers would not be permitted—more especially in a place which is considered so holy that travellers come from afar to worship within it.

In the palace of Akhbar the largest apartment, if one may call it by so domestic a name, is the Dewan Khass, or private Hall of Justice, where the emperor sat and administered the article in question. His Diwan or Judgment Seat still stands in the centre of the hall, which is a large pavilion, well elevated, built of white marble inlaid with stones of various colours, representing flowers. Upon its floor are placed two massive marble chairs. The hall was originally opened to the sky, but it has been roofed in by our practical countrymen, who now use the place as an arsenal. The floor is mainly occupied by stands of arms, and round the walls are displayed a number of standards, some captured from the enemy, and others the tattered colours of regiments of our own—records of many a glorious deed which has become a household word of history. At one end, reared against the wall, are the celebrated Gates of

Somnauth, or Somanâtha, which were taken by the Emperor Mahmoud from an ancient temple on the coast of Kutawah, near Bombay, in the year 1025, and carried by him to his capital at Ghuznee. After the Affghan war, Lord Ellenborough brought them away as a trophy, and deposited them where they now remain. The gates are made of sandal wood, elaborately carved and inlaid, though much of the inlaying has disappeared, the wood itself being not a little decayed. The Mahommedans have set their mark upon the gates, in the shape of the symbolical horse shoe and crescent, which may be seen securely nailed to their panels. There are also some bosses driven into it, supposed to have been taken from the shield of Mahmoud.

A native poet has celebrated the majesty of the Dewan Khass in the following lines :—

Its white battlements shine like the teeth of heaven ;\*  
 If any one should bow down in this place  
 Misfortune will fly from his forehead ;  
 It is the rising sun, good fortune attends there ;  
 Oppression that was is here lost,  
 And bound by the chains of justice ;  
 I will imagine each link has eyes,  
 For those who come to demand justice ;  
 In the palace of the king are a thousand grandeurs,  
 Like the sun shining upon the golden ornaments of the roof ;  
 When this building first adorned the world,  
 There was no other king like unto him,  
 And heaven granted him her protection ;  
 It never saw such a perfect edifice on this earth before ;  
 Its court is like the face of the moon ;  
 The shadow of heaven falls on its grounds ;  
 I endeavour to ascertain the date of its erection,  
 And the four doors of knowledge are open to me ;  
 Historians say, " This is an auspicious building,  
 And its origin blessed."

\* *i. e.*, the stars.

Outside the Dewan Khass, on an open terrace, is the black marble throne of Akhbar. This throne—which, despite the name by which it is generally called, happens to be of a dark blue colour—is a slab of marble about six feet in length, brought from Jussellmere. It is broken across, and the native legend is that it became so during the invasion of the Jats, when the King of Bhurtpore took the fort, and had the temerity to place himself in the imperial seat. The stone, it is said, resented the indignity upon the spot; and it is also added that blood oosed from it at the same time—a sure sign of the downfall of the empire. The same phenomenon, it is added, took place upon Lord Ellenborough seating himself upon the throne when he held state in Agra after the Affghan war; but this time it was supposed to have reference to the blood spilt at Caubul.

That the stone is broken is most true, and that there is a stain as of some red substance having escaped from it is also incontrovertible; but incredulous persons consider that though the stone was probably broken by the Jats, it was by some ruder process than that of sitting down on it; and they are also of opinion that the red stain may be attributed to the effects of a pigment, which escapes from several varieties of stones, in which the one in question may be included. It is a pity to spoil a good story, but I am afraid that the mystery of the marble throne is open to this vulgar solution.

The following verses are inscribed upon the throne, surrounded by flowers and ornamental devices:—

“Such a mighty king was he,  
That when he drew his sword  
The heads of all his enemies flew in pieces.

He was the heavenly gold-stone\* of the sun and moon,  
As the earthly one is of gold and silver.  
So long as the sun in the heavens remains,  
So may the throne of Suleém last ;  
May his splendours always remain like the light of God !  
Upon the throne of Souldan Suleem, son of Akhbar Shah,  
The august Jehangeer, (surnamed Noor-Deen,) for his justice,  
Succeeded to the crown and signet,  
And governed the country after the maxims of his father."

Opposite to the black throne is a small white slab, upon which, it is said, the young princes or viziers sat when the king held a court ; or sometimes, when it had no other occupant, his majesty's fool, who mimicked his master's motions, to the great delight of those who dared to derive pleasure from such a source.

Among the wonders of the place, the Sheesh Mahal, or Palace of Glass, deserves special notice. It is an oriental bath, the several chambers of which, as well as the bath itself, are lined with mirrors—walls and ceiling—everywhere except the floor. The mirrors are small, and when disposed in close order, completely cover the surface upon which they are placed. Being oval and convex, they each reflect the entire object presented to them, which thus multiplied a thousand times over. It is here that the emperor used to take his bath in the cool evenings, when the water was let in from without, flowing in mimic cascades from the sides of the apartment, over lamps placed in recesses. The effect of the flowing water, and the shining mirrors, and the brilliant light, is of a beauty beyond all we have seen in dreams, with the practical advantage of being real, and rendering enchantment unnecessary.

It was after the bath that the emperor would some-

\* *Mahakka*, "test-stone," on which gold is rubbed to prove it.



times sit upon the marble throne in the cool evening air, or if disposed for ladies' society, would divert himself with the "birds" of his zenana, as orientals sometimes delicately call the female members of their household, when speaking to persons of their own sex, to whom those earthly houris are unmentionable with the naked tongue. All day, be sure, these birds have been fluttering in their gilded cage, counting the sunny hours with a view to getting rid of them, filling up the time with the business of the toilette—which business is a pleasure, and may be prolonged to an indefinite extent;—inhaling the hookah to be scented and soothed, or eating the aromatic pân in search of a little excitement. A pleasant picture they present no doubt. Each with her jewel box beside her, that she may examine and compare her trinkets when seized with a yearning that way; her pipe to be flirted with at intervals, and her pân to be consumed whenever she is willing to make her teeth and lips look brown and besmeared. Each with her attendant fanning her, or it may be fashioning her hair anew. All gauzily clad, and in easy graceful attitudes, sitting or reclining. Most of them chattering, and it may be all of them at once, like so many birds upon branches. Some retailing whatever scandal may be gleaned from limited materials, others quarreling, and it is whispered, sometimes even fighting. And the party generally, you may depend upon it, as unmanageable as any large collection of young ladies must necessarily be. Thus has the day passed, with no more mental stimulus than is afforded by the chirpy conversation, and the monotonous chant, perhaps, of a love-song, until the cool hours, when the prisoners may disport themselves on the bit of terrace, or roof, or in the garden which may be appropriated to their recreation, or with the emperor when he

comes to divert himself in their company. A favourite amusement at this time is the game known in England as "hide-and- seek;" and at this the ladies play with great glee, in a number of underground passages below the palace, which may still be seen by the visitor to the Fort. The game has the great advantage of being intelligible to the meanest capacity. It has not to be learned, the knowledge of it being doubtless innate, and for the same reason it cannot be forgotten. It involves so little exertion of the intellectual faculty that it might easily be played by a person without a head, supposing that the body could make arrangements to run about by itself. You may suppose, therefore, that it is peculiarly adapted for the ladies of the zenana, who are not permitted such dangerous accomplishments as reading and writing, and who live rather more aloof from the world than the occupants of a nunnery.

Standing in these dark passages, one may fancy them peopled once more with the frolicsome players, whose mirth, you may be sure, gets fast and furious when once they are let loose upon the diversion. What a pattering of naked feet—slippers of course are spurned—upon the paved floor; what a tinkling of golden anklets among the seekers for the hidden one; what a struggle, what a screaming, what a clatter of ornaments, when the lost one is found and brought away in triumph, for another to take her turn! And there are lost ones, too, who are never found at all, if they happen to have incurred the displeasure of their master. There is yet a well in a dark corner where such offenders were quietly deposited,—one splash, and they were never more seen or heard of. Into this well, now dried up, two English soldiers accidentally fell some years ago. They were the last victims, and the

opening has since been partially bricked over. The underground passages, so the natives declare, were of greater extent than appears in the present day. There was a subterranean communication from the fort to the Taj, and also to an old ruin called Nâu Mylah, in the cantonments; but all traces of these, if they ever existed, have disappeared.

On the walls of the palace are many flowers painted upon the marble, which have preserved their colour almost unimpaired; and among these the flowers of Europe are represented by the tulip and the carnation, both of which were not uncommon in Persia. There are lilies, too, carved in relief upon the marble, executed with delicate art. Inlaid flowers are also to be found, the shadowing of the turned leaves being represented by stones of darker colour, inserted with rare ingenuity. Among the specimens of carving which abound, the screens are distinguished above all by the wondrous beauty of their workmanship.

There are many native legends concerning the fort. One is to the effect that a very holy man, by name Bhyroo, inhabited one of the bastions,—now called by his name,—and that he threw himself into the ditch when the fort was taken by the Jats. •His spirit is supposed to wander about the place in many shapes, particularly in those of a black snake and a white cat. Some years since, the native sentries presented arms whenever any animal of these kinds passed their posts. Upon enquiry into the origin of this custom, it was found that the order to pay this mark of respect had been handed down from guard to guard ever since the place came into the hands of the English.

Although the fort was the work of Mussulmans, it appears that the Hindoos had previously built upon its

site. There is still within its walls the remains of an old palace, of apparently Hindoo architecture. They are of red sandstone, carved with great elaboration.

There is another favorite residence of the emperor Akhbar at Futtehpore Sikree, some two and twenty miles from Agra, which it would be well for the reader—who has to perform the journey only upon paper—to visit before making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the great man at Secundra, only five miles from the station. Of the origin of this palace, an account is given in a native manuscript, to the following effect.

King Jelal-e-deen Mahomed Akhbar, when at the age of twenty-eight years, having lost all his progeny, went to the tomb of Kourja Moenudeen Chistie, a celebrated shrine at Futtehpore Sikree, and prayed for another family in the place of that which had been taken from him. He vowed that if the High God granted him a son that should live, he would walk barefoot to the saint's tomb. When he had said this, a priest by name Sheik Suleem, a most pious man, who had travelled all over the world, and now lived, like a hermit, in a small hut on one of the hills near Futtehpore Sikree, gave him the news that by the intercession of Moenudeen Chistee his wish would be accomplished. After this the emperor went frequently to the sheik, and placed great confidence in him. One day, when the king was in a reverie, he asked Sheik Suleem how many children he should have. The sheik answered that he would intercede with heaven. The king thereupon promised that his first son should be placed under the care of the sheik to educate. The sheik agreed to accept the charge, and said that he would give the child his name. When the empress was near her confinement, the emperor sent her to the sheik, that the child might be born within the

shadow of his sanctity; the child was there born, and received the name of Soultan Selim; and the emperor, in honour of the event, made Futtehpore Sikree a great place, and brought his court there, and in fourteen or fifteen years built on the hill, which was formerly the abode of the wolf and the hyena, most splendid palaces, with gardens and wells, and enclosed the whole with a strong wall of more than three miles in girth. After the victory of Goojerat, he called this place Futtehpore, or "Town of Victory."

Of the "Town of Victory" only the ruins now remain, but the great palace has habitable apartments where European visitors may rest and refresh. The gateway is approached by a magnificent flight of steps, supposed to be the largest in the world, the highest step standing one hundred and twenty feet from the ground.

A few years ago there was a guide, "since dead I believe, who showed the visitors over the place, and entertained them with many stories concerning it. Busharut Ally, who claimed to be a descendant of Selim Chistee, was a very intelligent man, of imposing appearance, made more conspicuous by an enormous white beard. He was a well-known character to travellers, was of great age, and had preserved large numbers of testimonials from distinguished persons for whom he had done the honours of the place. Among the "chits" which he displayed to visitors were those of governor generals, and some of the highest functionaries of the state, of days long since past. He would talk interminably to anybody who would listen to him, and some of his stories have been preserved. Here is one of them.

It happened one day that Akhbar, being out hunting, lost his way, and becoming thirsty, requested a countryman, whom he saw at work in a field, to give him a

piece of sugar-cane to allay the sensation. So the man left his work, and going into the midst of the field, brought a large cane to the king, who asked him why he went so far for the cane when there were plenty of others near at hand?

The countryman replied, "Because you are the king, and I wished to procure for you the largest cane in my field."

The king then said, "If you knew me to be the king why did you not salam to me when I first came?"

The man answered, "It is your place to salam to me, when you have received from me, whereas I have had nothing from you."

The king was pleased at the answer, and said, "I have heard the truth once in my life." He thereupon gave the man a magnificent gold ring, worth three thousand rupees, telling him to point out the way to the palace, and to go thither himself in two days, when, on presenting the ring, he should receive a *bukhsheesh* of fifty rupees.

Returning to his palace, the king told a friend, a certain Rajah Beer Bul, of the adventure which had befallen him. Beer Bul said that the king had been too trusting in giving the man so valuable a ring, and expecting him to return it for the small gratuity of fifty rupees. But the king said, "He told me the truth; he will be honest."

In the meantime the countryman, going home with the ring upon his finger, was met by the kotwal, or chief of the police of the village, who took the ring from him, declaring that it must have been stolen, and threatening to cast him into prison if he made any complaint. So the two days passed away, and the poor man dared not go to the palace.

Months passed away, and the emperor heard nothing of his ring. Beer Bul laughed; but the emperor always maintained that it would be restored some day. While the emperor was waiting for the day to come, the kotwal, having possession of his ring, was able to make any amount of exactions in the village in his name; and the kotwal grew rich by plundering the poor.

But one day Beer Bul and the emperor were riding together, and saw the countryman a short distance off. Akhbar pointed him out, and Beer Bul said, "If he is innocent he will not run away upon seeing you; if he is guilty he will hide himself." The king approached, and the man continued his ploughing. Akhbar then asked the man why he had not brought the ring back to him? The man answered that it was taken from him by violence. Akhbar said, "Why did not you come and complain?" The man answered, "O king! my story would not have been believed." Beer Bul said, "Here is truth, but it is mixed with lies." The ploughman then told how the kotwal had taken the ring from him, and threatened to throw him into prison if he complained.

The king thereupon went to the kotwal, and approaching him unawares perceived the ring upon his finger, though he appeared not to make note of it. He asked that functionary how he contrived to keep up the magnificent style in which he lived upon such poor pay as seventy rupees a month? The kotwal, confused, took the ring off and hid it about him, calling the villagers to bear testimony to his fairness; and these, through fear of his vengeance, were all in his favour, swearing that he was a most just man, and never oppressed them in any way. Akhbar then gave orders for the countryman to be brought and confronted with the kotwal, who, when he saw him, turned white with

fear. Seeing him trembling and discomfited, the people took courage and exposed all his oppressions, but said, "He showed us your majesty's ring—what could we poor eaters of dirt do?"

The king then ordered the kotwal to give the countryman back his ring, put the countryman in the place of the kotwal, and reduced the kotwal to the place of the countryman. Beer Bul said, "Honesty will always triumph; I have seen justice once in my life."

Beer Bul and Akhbar appear to have been great friends, but nevertheless the king—according to the old guide already mentioned—did not scruple to play upon him a practical joke, which might have cost him his life. One day Akhbar asked his friend which was best—one's own personal strength or that of an army. Beer Bul declared in favour of the former; but the king was of a contrary opinion. Some time after this conversation the two were out hunting, and while they were sitting upon the ground refreshing themselves with some baked bread, Akhbar suddenly gave orders to his mahout (elephant driver) to make the animal trample upon Beer Bul. The mahout prepared to obey; and Beer Bul, seeing that nothing but his own alertness could save him, seized by the tail a dog which happened to be looking out for scraps, and flung him with all his might against the elephant's forehead. The animal, not used to this species of warfare, was seized with fright, and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. Beer Bul thereupon turned round and reminded the king that he had lost his argument, since the personal strength of Beer Bul had vanquished a force so infinitely superior. The story has not much point, according to European notions, but these two solemn Asiatics no doubt relished it exceedingly.



Another story derived from the same source is better worth re-producing.

The practice of wandering about at night in disguise was not peculiar to the Caliph Haroun al Raschid. Several of the Mogul emperors frequently indulged in the diversion, and among them Akhbar Khan. One night, while on one of these nocturnal expeditions in the city, he overheard the daughter of a merchant, who was desirous of being married, telling her confidential servant to try and find her a clever, handsome young man, for a husband. But she required as a condition of being accepted that he should answer this enigma:—"If they are come, do not come; if they are not come, then come." The servant went forth on her mission, and met the king, saying to him, "My young mistress calls you; come with me." The king agreed, whereupon the servant told him of the question which he was required to answer. The king could make nothing of it, so the young woman told him he was a fool, and might stay where he was. She then went to another handsome young man, and told him that her mistress had called him. He agreed to go; and on hearing the condition that he must answer the question, "If they are come, do not come; if they are not come, come," he replied at once, "They have not come." The maid said, "Then come you along with me." But the young man now rejoined, that he must first require the lady to answer him a question also:—"If withered and faded, do not come; if fair and plump, come." The young lady, upon the message being brought to her, answered with an alacrity characteristic of her sex, "Fair," and bade the maid bring the young man quickly. So the servant conducted the young man, and the king walked stealthily behind, to see the end of the affair. The maid stopped

opposite a house, where there was a bridge made of crystal over a stream of water before the door; but the bridge was so like the water that the young man who accompanied her could not distinguish whether there was a bridge or not. And the young man said to himself, "If I take off my clothes and swim, the young lady will laugh at me for not going over the bridge; and if I try to walk, and there is no bridge, she will laugh at me for wetting my garments." In this doubtful case the young man adopted the expedient of throwing his ring towards the middle of the stream, so that he might hear whether it fell into the water or not. The ring sounded upon the glass bridge, upon which the young man followed in the same direction and picked it up, proceeding across the bridge into the house, the king going after and seating himself on the steps. The merchant's daughter came forward to meet the young man, and gave him a lemon, which he cut into two pieces and threw asunder. The young lady was pleased with his appearance, and conversed and played chess with him for some time, after which he went home. The king followed him, leaving a mark of pân leaf on the door, that he might know it again, and went home to his palace.

The next morning, at Durbar, the king gave orders for the young man to be brought before him. When he appeared, the king asked him the meaning of the question he had answered, and of the one he gave, and also concerning the ring and the lemon. The young man was somewhat astonished, as may be supposed, but said that he did not know. The king repeated his question, first in a friendly, then in an angry manner, and finding the young man obstinate, ordered him to be hanged. The officers took him away to carry the sentence into execu-

tion, dressing him handsomely, and playing music, as if he was going to a marriage. The maid meeting the young man on the road, told her mistress of the fate which awaited her lover. The lady immediately ordered her attendant to take a flask of rose-water, and break it under the gallows, which the girl did.

The young man, seeing this, said: "Tell the king, if he asks me now, I will explain all."

The king, upon receiving the message, ordered him to be again brought before the throne, and commanded him to speak.

Upon this the youth said: "O lord of the world! the words, 'If they are come, do not come; if they are not come, then come,' mean this:—'If grey hairs have come upon your head, do not come to me; if they have not come, and your hair remains black, do come.'"

Then the king demanded of him what he had meant by the question which he had asked in return. He said that he had simply meant to say that if the lady was old and ugly he would not go, but that if she was young and fair he would. The king then asked how he had found out the bridge, which the youth explained by telling him of the test made with the ring. The mystery of the lemon still remained unexplained. The meaning of his cutting it in two, he said, was this. The lady told him she was of noble descent, and would be compromised by his visit if it were known. By the mode in which he treated the lemon, he meant to tell her that though his head were cut in two pieces, he would not divulge her secret. His sincerity he had proved even at the foot of the gallows. But when the lady ordered the bottle of rose-water to be broken, his knowledge of signs told him that he might speak; for he knew that as the sweet scent diffused itself when the bottle was broken,

so if he broke his promise, nothing but fair fortune would follow.

The king was so satisfied with these answers, that he said nothing more about hanging, but gave orders to the relations of the young lady to have her married to the youth, and this done, the bridegroom was made the king's vizier, and admitted to his confidence and friendship.

Akhbar Khan died at last, like other men, and was buried at Secundra, about five miles from Agra, where his magnificent monument remains but little injured to this day.\* The ground in which the tomb stands is about forty acres in extent, enclosed by an embattled wall. The central building, containing the tomb, consists of five terraces placed one above the other, gradually decreasing in size from the base, so that a pyramidal effect is produced. Four of these terraces, as well as the screens with which they are enclosed, are made of red sandstone. The upper terrace, with its screens, is made of white marble. At each angle of the outer wall, which is of a square form, is an octagonal tower, surmounted by an open pavilion; and there are also four fine gateways of red stone, like the walls, the principal gateway being inlaid with white marble, and crowned by four minarets of the same material. The latter have had their tops knocked off, some say by the Jats, who used them as marks to point their cannon at in sport. Others declare that the act was committed by

\* "Secundra," I may here observe, is a corruption of "Alexander," the place being named after Alexander the Great, though why is not exactly clear. since there is no record of that monarch having ever advanced beyond the Punjaub; and even into this territory he did not penetrate farther than the river Jhelum, where he fought his great battle with Porus.

order of the commanding officer of an English dragoon regiment quartered on the spot, because some of his men had fallen from the minarets and been killed. The latter statement, however, is scarcely borne out by probability, as many high places remain undisturbed, from which similar accidents might occur.

The tomb of Akhbar is in an open vault underneath the central building; but the *jawab* tomb, as the natives call it, that is to say, the tomb *answering* to it, or what we may call the representative tomb, is on the topmost terrace. In the centre is the sarcophagus, covered with a crimson cloth, to protect it from the sun by day and the dew by night. On removing the cover, the visitor beholds one of the most beautiful objects that has ever been fashioned by man. The form is simple as its subject demands; but the ornamentation is of the richest and most elaborate kind, while the material—the purest of white marble—is as fresh as if it had just come from the chisel. The open-work screens which surround the terrace are of the same, and through their delicate lace-like design, you may see the gardens below, with their broad-leaved trees and bright-blossoming flowers, raised walks and well-sunken beds, strongly contrasting with the bare and almost desolate appearance of the country around.

Upon the tomb there is written the ninety-nine names of God, and also the following verses:—

“In the name of the everlasting God,  
Who knoweth not annihilation,  
The bestower of thrones to all princes,  
Who from the void can produce everything,  
From whence munificence and justice springs.  
His mercy is on all who seek him,  
His justice hall is open alike to rich and poor,  
Great Creator of the universe,

And lover of pure lives.  
By his everlasting grace he made the two worlds,  
The one known to all of us,  
The other as yet a mystery.  
He gives crowns and thrones to kings,  
Whose justice makes the people glad,  
Like a garden in the early spring.  
If such a king existed on earth,  
He would be like "the shadow of God's protection,"  
And would bestow favors on us,  
The same as on his own relations.  
It was in the year 962 of Mahomet, that king Akhbar  
(Whose name be blessed,) sat on his golden throne,  
Girt about with clouds ;  
He adorned the world by his equity and justice,  
And all his subjects were contented :  
Worthy men hearing of his bounty,  
Came from afar off to be his servants ;  
In the twinkling of an eye, he put forth his arm,  
And subdued nations like the lion.  
Like the bounty of God which is on all,  
So was King Akhbar's bounty ;  
His eye was ever watchful over all,  
And if any came to his justice hall  
To ask forgiveness or mercy,  
It was given as quick as thought flies  
From the fish, to the sun,\* (i. e. from earth to heaven,)  
The world overflowed with the report of his fame,  
Like the breast of one, who cannot keep a secret ;  
He governed his subjects so well,  
That the high God even gave him praise ;  
And he reigned fifty-two years with great wisdom.  
He was king of the seven quarters of the earth,  
And now heaven is his also.  
Don't fancy weak mortal, that heaven will favour you :  
To the wise and learned, this world  
Is nothing but mere earth and water ;  
It remains stable to no one long ;

\* A Mahometan Metaphor.

It is full of hatred and enmity,  
 And love and hatred cannot go together.  
 This world is like the mirage of the desert :  
 Whoever satisfied his thirst from that ?  
 King Akhbar so governed the world,  
 That it became like unto heaven :  
 May the High God always be kind to his spirit,  
 And may the heavens rejoice at his coming."

The following lines are written around the walls of the tomb :—

"The poet desires that the mighty kingdom,  
 By the grace of God, may remain for ever.  
 Wise men were astonished at the prosperity of the country,  
 And came from afar off, to see its magnificence.  
 The king was as benevolent as the "shadow of God :"  
 May another as good as he arise.  
 Time changes everything continually,  
 And never remains the same with anyone.  
 The king is like the empyrean heaven,  
 And his Durbar, like the place where the throne of God is,  
 If a mountain should present itself before it,  
 It is only as a blade of grass.  
 He sat upon his throne like "the shadow of God,"  
 And his throne and crown increased in splendour  
 When he made use of them,  
 As the sun's brightness becomes more brilliant  
 From its shining on the face of a river,  
 He was benevolent, merciful, and noble,  
 Of most enlightened understanding,  
 And most intelligent mind ;  
 He conquered the world, gave away its kingdoms,  
 Then left the world—for the next one,  
 And in its garden he sowed good seed.  
 Having come from the country of Persia,  
 He is now gone to the heavenly abodes of the blessed.  
 His spirit was like the rays of the sun and moon,  
 May it now shine like the high God's."

On the north door of the tomb are these lines :—

“ This arch is more splendid  
Than the one in the ninth heavens :  
The sun derives its lustre from it ;  
Yea, the arch in the tomb of Akhbar  
Is more beautiful than the seven kingdoms.” \*

In the same building may be seen the tomb of the Princess Maria, or Miriana, one of Akhbar's wives, said to be a Christian, and who was probably of Portuguese origin. That Akhbar should have had a Christian wife is likely enough, as he was the most tolerant king whom India had known, and, among Mahomedans, a marvel of enlightenment. His general character, indeed, was such as to endear him to every class of his countrymen. He was wise as he was powerful, and generous as he was just—of course in a strictly oriental sense of those terms, his mode of government not being exactly in accordance with European ideas of the virtues in question. For much of the popularity of his administration, moreover, he was indebted to the wise counsels of his favourite minister, Vizier Abul Fusil, who is buried in the tomb called Etimad-u-Dowla, near Agra, on the other side of the Jumna, the ornamental part of which is much defaced, but shows the remains of great beauty. This minister was murdered, while travelling, by some robbers, said to have been employed by Selim, a son of Akhbar, who was jealous of his influence over his father.

Leaving Sekundra, let us conduct the reader back into Agra, and take him to the Taj.

The Taj Mahal, or Palace Tomb, otherwise called the Taj Beehee ka Rosa, or Crown of Edifices, is the mau-

\* *i.e.*, the whole world which the Mahometans imagine to be composed of seven kingdoms.



soleum of the favourite wife of Shah Jehan one of the sons of Akhbar, and the second in succession after that monarch. Shah Jehan caused it to be raised in her honour, and he lies within it by her side.

It is a tale full of sweet sorrow—that of the emperor and his beautiful empress. But before giving what version of it I can, I will attempt to convey some idea of the appearance of an edifice which may well be called one of the wonders of the world.

Travellers have tried to describe the Taj. They have all signally failed. I shall fail myself, and yet, like others, I cannot refrain from offering the homage of an attempt. The moth cannot keep at a respectful distance from the flame, although he may be sure that he will perish miserably. Can the “artist in words” turn aside from so fair a model, merely from fear of burning his fingers?

The first sight of the Taj is usually gained at a distance of four or five miles from the city, where the traveller sees what to him has the aspect of a white rolling cloud, clearly defined against the bright blue sky, and tipped with a golden light. On a nearer view, the cloud shows a certain regularity of form, and assumes the appearance of a fairy palace. Yet this Crown of Edifices is not one of those objects which depend upon distance for their enchantment. If it is beautiful from afar, it is lovely upon nearer approach; and there are few who are long at Agra before they are under its spell.

There are more modes than one of making acquaintance with the Taj. You may visit it with a party of lively ladies, to whom you are bound to devote your chief attention, under pain of social outlawry—which is no joke in India, especially in the provinces, where

there is not much choice of society. In such a case you will be so occupied with giving your arm here, offering your hand there, supplying unnecessary assistance everywhere, having a possible parasol to hold, and being pestered with questions out of place, that you will most likely come away with only a confused idea of a very brilliant scene, in which white marble, green trees, inlaid pavement, gay flowers, and sparkling fountains, are mingled with Paris bonnets, gossamer robes, eyes used for more than merely seeing, and voices whose principal mission seems to be to exclaim—How charming ! how delightful ! how exquisite ! at every turn—all mingled together in bewildering confusion. Under such circumstances, I pity the unfortunate man who attempts to form an adequate conception of the spectacle. I have no doubt that either of the ladies would form a very agreeable companion alone ; but somehow, when persons of that pleasing sex get together in any number, they always think more of themselves and of the society, than of any object that they are met to see. It is for this reason, and not through any feeling of disrespect, that I would rather not be one of such a party to view the Taj.

Such is my deliberate opinion after trying the experiment. But I have also assisted at another mode of making the excursion, which I think the reader will agree with me is rather more objectionable. I once went to see the Taj with three lively subalterns in the army. We were four upon a dog-cart : we drove a tandem, and one of the party had brought a post-horn, which he sounded when it so pleased him, either as a mark of contempt for the occupants of passing vehicles, (I remember that with a sudden burst he sent the brigadier's horses flying, and nearly upset that respect-

able old officer into a ditch,) or, when nobody was near to plague, in ostentatious defiance of the universe generally. In this pleasant manner we proceeded along the road until we gained the principal gateway of the tomb—itself a magnificent building, with its lofty arch of red stone and its white marble domes. Alighting here, it was found impossible to proceed without refreshments, the setting sun not having, in the opinion of the majority of the party (I will not invidiously mention the name of the one who was opposed to the arrangement), sufficiently cooled the air. Accordingly from the recesses of the vehicle were drawn forth sundry bottles of soda water and one of cognac, besides an appropriate number of capacious tumblers; and then and there was concocted a series of doses of that mixture known as a “peg.” Why it is called a “peg” I cannot say, for upon that point commentators differ; suffice it that it consists of a certain proportion of soda water and the cognac aforesaid, which combination, while not unknown in Europe, is particularly celebrated in the East for its sustaining qualities. Of it there was great imbibition at the gate, and then (I am sorry to have to record the fact) one of the *syces* (grooms) who had been running after the trap all the way from the station, was made to carry a basket to a convenient place in the interior, containing further materials for the same refreshment, with a view to possible contingencies, which very punctually arrived. After that precaution, and a general lighting of cheroots, the happy party sauntered in to enjoy a sight of the most beautiful edifice in the world.

Perhaps the reader will expect me to “draw a veil”—in the language of romance-writers—upon the scene that followed. But there is not the smallest occasion to do so. Nobody did anything very wrong on the occasion—

unless the arrival of the contingency before alluded to, be considered very reprehensible—but certainly everybody was witty who could be, and everybody, whether he could be witty or not, was very gay—and somehow I did not consider the mode pursued precisely the best manner of enjoying the Taj.

Upon an expedition of the kind I have generally found that a single companion was the best adapted for appreciative purposes. And this may be of either sex, the wife of one's bosom or the friend of one's soul, according to convenience. They say, that two is company and three is none. This is generally true, and always so under circumstances which excite reflection or emotion. One likes to say what one thinks at the time, irrespective of captious criticism or cold sarcasm. A well-matched pair always respect one another, even in their less vigorous moments; while a third person is seldom to be trusted. Men talk nonsense in *tête-à-tête*, especially late at night, which if known would make their friends set them down for fools. Yet how seldom is it that one betrays the other!

I do not wish it to be understood that a couple of fools are the most appropriate persons to visit the Taj together, or that sensible men should go there in pairs merely for the sake of talking nonsense. I am not supposing the case of fools at all, nor of sensible men who talk exactly nonsense. What I mean to insist upon merely is, that a greater degree of confidence is inspired by the dual arrangement, and that the best ideas of most men are brought out by the means.

Let us suppose a model pair, in a frame of mind not quite fitted either for a funeral or a fête, who smoke as good men should—especially in the East—but who abjure present pegs as inappropriate to the occasion,

setting forth together to see the Taj ; and having sent them on their mission, let us follow them and share their impressions.

Entering, then, by the gate already referred to, we stand at the opening of an avenue of cypress trees, planted with such regularity that the vista appears of no great extent, and yet the white marble building at the other end must be some distance off ; for although its swelling dome appears far above the trees, its proportions seem diminished by space, while its colour is so pure, and its traits are so soft, that it has all the delicacy of a gem. This is our first view of the Taj. We can as yet see little more than the terrace upon which it is raised, flanked by two tall minarets, with two others in perspective—thus indicating that the platform is square—and the large swelling dome crowning the central structure ; the whole of the whitest of white marble, rendered yet more dazzling by the light of the morning sun, which has just risen, and is now filling the east with flakes of burning gold.

As we advance into the avenue of cypresses we find that this is only one feature of a gorgeous garden, laid out in the most perfect oriental taste. Along the avenue on either side is a narrow walk paved with stone, leading to the end of the vista ; and the space between is occupied by square sunken tanks, from which issue a line of fountains, parallel with the paved walks and the cypresses, and extending to the terrace at the end. On the outer side of the paved walks, which are crossed at intervals by others, are sunken flower beds, filled with the richest and rarest plants, as well as the most plentiful, which are fortunately roses. Filling up every available space, and giving an agreeable variety to the scene, are trees of many kinds. Here may be seen the palm, with

all its feathery varieties; the plantain, with its great broad leaves shading the delicate fruit; the lime, with leaves not broad but deliciously fragrant; the orange, from which it is so pleasant to gather the green fruit with the white frost on in the winter mornings; besides mangos in profusion, and other fruit trees, as the peach, the guava, the lechie, the loquat, and the pomegranite.

But let us pass on through the avenue of cypresses by one of the side walks which are divided by the fountains. The swelling dome, the glimpse of terrace, the towering minarets are still before us, but somehow after walking for some minutes we seem to be no nearer to them than when we set out. We now find what has been already hinted to the reader, that the distance is very deceptive, the length of the avenue being far greater than it appears to be, an illusion caused by the perfect regularity of the plan. As it is with the avenue, so with the building itself; as we approach nearer we perceive that it is of far greater dimensions than we had previously supposed, and that it is to the exquisite harmony of its proportions that the deception must be ascribed. The structure before us is nearly three hundred feet high from the ground to the golden crescent which surmounts the dome; and the minarets at the corners are nearly two hundred feet from the terrace. I mention these particulars, in this place, in order to show that there is no reason for the visitor to be disappointed in the size of the place; but in truth such a consideration would not enter his mind at the moment, so absorbed would he be in the contemplation of its matchless beauty.\* Of this beauty, all attempts to give an idea must be clumsy and futile. I can, therefore, only name the component parts, and leave the reader to make the most of his imagination for the whole. Described, then,

in plain matter-of-fact language, the Taj may be thus disposed of.

The terrace is reached by a double flight of steps exactly at the end of the avenue, but unseen from thence, and from which you emerge, as if through a trap-door upon the marble floor, laid out in well defined squares, and surrounding the main building on its four sides.

This main building is square in form, but with an approach to octagon, that is to say, it is square with the corners cut off, but not sufficiently cut off to destroy the squareness. Above it rises the most beautiful feature of the structure, as far as form is concerned—the large dome swelling from its base as in most oriental architecture, but of a peculiar delicacy of outline such as has been seldom or never seen in any other example. For form alone, this edifice, standing thus upon its terrace with the corner minarets, in the midst of a beautiful garden, must be pronounced one of the finest architectural creations in the world; but what must be said of it when we behold the pure and brilliant material of which it is composed, and the precious and perfect elaboration with which the material is inlaid? In outline all is grand and bold, and yet of so soft and so tender a purity as to convey the idea of feminine beauty. Were those proportions displayed merely in the bare white marble they would yet be beautiful indeed, but clad as they are in precious stones, bestowed with such prodigality and disposed with such art, the effect is even doubly enhanced. So perfect indeed is the simple charm, that far from being lost it gains<sup>+</sup> fresh grace from ornamentation. I know this assertion is in opposition to the hackneyed idea of “beauty unadorned,” and I must allow it to remain so. It does

not follow that because a maxim has been quoted ten thousand times that it is true in every case.

Having intoxicated the sense with the one beauty, let us now sober it with the other. As yet we have seen the effect of the precious stones by the additional lustre given to the white marble in the rays of the sun. Let us now examine the inlaying that is within our reach, and test its execution. The letters and flowers which compose the designs are so perfect that the dead queen within might have worn them as gems at her wedding; yet these are found, gathered in wreaths or words, profusely scattered over all the principal portions of the building. The words are those of the Koran: the four first chapters are on the outside of the entrance gateway, and three more are on the inside. Round the walls and on the doorways of the Taj itself are written, it is said, *all* the remaining chapters of the book as complete as in any published edition. The characters are all in black marble inlaid in the white. Well might Bishop Heber say that the Pathans designed like Titans and finished like jewellers!

But it is now time to view the interior. The great doorway on the side opposite the entrance gate, and commanding the avenue of cypress trees, is of wood, strengthened by nails, of an aspect certainly "picturesque," in the ordinary sense of the term, but scarcely in keeping with the delicate elegance of the building which it guards. This is the fault neither of Shah Jehan nor his architects, but of those ruthless Jats who, it is said, carried off the original gates, which were of massive silver. But the wooden door will open at any rate, and now we are inside. Here we find ourselves in a new scene of enchantment; our gaze mounts upwards at first and takes in the magnificent dome, with the



symbolic egg, suspended from the centre; below, like the dome itself, all is pure white, with the exception of the rich inlaid ornaments. The sarcophagi of Noor Jehan and her husband are side by side in the centre, enclosed by screens of the most delicate workmanship; the smaller one is that of the queen; both are inlaid with a richness beyond that of any portion of the building in which they are contained; and the wreaths of flowers upon the screens are of perfect beauty. The sarcophagi, however, are only "jewabs." The real resting-places of the pair are below, similar in form, but more plain. These may be seen by the visitor upon descending a narrow stair through an opening in the floor.

Resting for awhile in the cool air and subdued light of the marble hall, let us carry our minds back to the past and recall the story of the great monarch and his fair queen, and how it came to be raised—this greatest tribute Power ever paid to Love.

In a native manuscript is to be found the following "true and faithful account of Banou Begum, (called the Splendid) celebrated as Taj Beebee, the wife of Shah Jehan, daughter of Vizier Arsuf Khan, and granddaughter of the Nawab Etimad-e-Dowlah," the minister whose tomb has already been mentioned.

"The Emperor Shah Jehan, Protector of the Poor, Almsgiver to the Distressed, Possessor of the World, Defender of the True Faith, and of Most Enlightened Understanding, had four sons borne him by Banou Begum.

"The eldest was Dara Shiko, whom he most loved, and appointed successor to the throne, having previously made him Soubadar of Hindostan.

"The second, Shah Shojah, who was very learned, he

made Soubadar of Bengal, and the east of India. This prince collected round him all the wise men, and those celebrated for their strength, and obeyed his father in everything.

“The third was Aurungzebe Alumgheer. He governed very wisely over the soubar of the Dekhan.

“The fourth was Mahomed Morad Bakoh, who had the provinces of Goozerat, Tatta, and Bukhur. He governed like an emperor, acquainted his father with all that was going on, and took his advice on every point.

“The emperor had also four daughters, very beautiful, modest, and clever, and obedient to their parents.

“The eldest was Unjumund Arraie Begum; the second was Gutte Arraie Begum; the third was Jehan Arraie Begum; the fourth was Dahur Arraie Begum.

“The last born cried before it was born;—whereat the Begum was much alarmed, as were all who heard the ominous sign. They all cried: ‘Oh God, this is most marvellous; after this, bestow nothing but good!’ Then they went and informed the emperor of the strange event; and the emperor ordered the wise men, and the physicians, and the clever nurses to be assembled; and all did their best; and the vizier’s daughters also prepared medicine for the suffering Begum.

‘In this world there falls no leaf  
Without the will of God.’

“All their medicines were useless. The empress gave up all hopes of life, and calling the emperor to her bedside, said weepingly: ‘O king, such calamities have befallen, that I am greatly distressed; after them I know not what may happen.’ On hearing these words, the king placed his finger on his mouth, but would not

afford her any relief, though he was very kind and affectionate.

“The empress restored all her jewels and ornaments to her husband, and besought him to be kind to all her children ; and sometimes the two shed tears, and sometimes smiled, and talked of the world to come.

“The empress said : ‘ If a child cries before it is born, it is a sign that the mother cannot live. What I have ever said that has displeased you, pardon, for I have not long to remain on this earth.’

“The emperor, when he heard these words, began to weep greatly, and was sore troubled.

“Then the empress added : ‘ O king, I have lived with you in years of prosperity and adversity. Now you are a mighty monarch, and commander of the world, and I have two requests to make to you, which I trust you will grant.’ The emperor promised, and asked what they were. The empress said : ‘ The High God has given you four sons and three daughters to preserve your name—do not take to yourself another wife, that enmity may arise among them. This is my first request. My second is, that after I am removed from this world, you will build such a monument over me as the world has never seen before.’

“The emperor, weeping, promised again to do what the empress desired.

“The child was born. Every possible means were taken to preserve the life of the mother ; but

‘ When death comes,  
The physicians may stay away.’

“This was at the commencement of the cold weather, and the empress’s hands and feet became chilled, and weeping and lamentation were heard all over the palace,

as if the day of judgment was at hand, and the king did nothing but weep.

‘Like a hermit who cares not for wealth,  
And miserable as a lover without his mistress.’

“So the empress died, and mingled with the angels in paradise, and her remains are interred in a tomb on the site of the Taj.

“The architects brought to the emperor many plans and drawings for his inspection; and when he had chosen one of them, a wooden model was made of it. In sixteen years time, the present matchless edifice was erected, and the date of the Begum’s death was written upon the tomb :—

‘The Momtaz Mayl from this world has gone,  
The angels have opened the gates of heaven for her,  
They gave the date and the year  
When Momtaz Mayl came to heaven.’”\*

On one side of the tomb are verses in praise of the Taj, by the celebrated poet, Shah Bodeen :—

“This wonderful building is like those in the time of Bulkeese;†  
The resting-place of the empress,  
Its splendour like the gardens of Eden,  
Its perfumes like those in paradise;  
In its courts frankincense grows,  
And the fairies keep them clean with their eyelashes,  
Its doorways and walls are all covered with gems,  
Shining like pearls and jewels.  
The water all came from the fountains of light,

These verses are so written in the Persian, that the last verse is composed of letters which also stand for numbers; and these show that the event took place in the year 1623, A. D.

† Queen of Sheba.

The place is marvellous, and its rank most high ;  
 May the clouds of plenty always rain upon it.  
 If in this place any one should pray,  
 God will quickly grant his prayer.  
 Like the winds which come here empty.  
 And go away loaded with perfume.  
 So from hence no one shall go without benefit also ;  
 There is a flower in this garden, like 'the garden of God ;' \*  
 Yea, even more sweet than that ;  
 No flower here blooms except in solitude ;  
 And when the rain of blessing falls,  
 Anyone entering these doors,  
 Is like one whose sins are forgiven ;  
 When the buds wish to burst forth,  
 The winds never harm them,  
 They are as gentle as if they hid in the buds themselves.  
 Should anyone ask pardon of God,  
 He will receive it in this place dedicated to Him ;  
 Should anyone bathe his face in its waters,  
 His sins are forgiven him ;  
 Should the sun, or moon, this tomb perceive,  
 Tears would enter in their eyes ;  
 The place is like one who has taken the veil,  
 The sun itself is a suppliant there,  
 The heavens look for sustenance from this garden.  
 When the sun sets, then the moon rises,  
 Eternity itself looses its power in comparison to it,  
 For death has given up his right here.  
 This building is not man's invention,  
 But is evidently made by God's assistance,  
 And is as durable as the creed of the faithful.  
 The wonderful talisman, on seeing it, is ashamed.  
 Whoever enters this place, will remain in security for ever ;  
 When the Deity built it, the autumn time fled to the jungle."

Upon the tomb of Shah Jehan, in the vault underneath, are written the following words :

"This splendid tomb is like the palace of the starry

\* A plant growing in the gardens of Eden.

firmament, the resting-place in heaven of Shah Jehan, the second lord of felicity. May God preserve this tomb from His seat in heaven. He died, 1076, A.H."

And now let us come forth again and breathe the air. The sun is up, and in its light the Taj is a blaze of beauty. There are many who declare that it is in the full glare of day that the building is seen at its best; but I must give my preference to the morning or evening, when the sun is in its rise or its decline. In the moonlight there is another separate charm attached to the Taj. Then indeed it is a fairy palace, a castle in the air, a dream in marble, as it has been variously described by travellers. But after all it is difficult to say when this wonderful edifice is most magnificent. Let us suppose that to-night will be dark, and that our friends, whom we have accompanied on their visit, return to the scene of their morning's enchantment. It must be a very dark night indeed if the Taj does not stand out a bright object. But to bring it forth in all its splendour, there are ample means at hand. You have but to give the order to an attendant, and in a few minutes the place is seen in a brilliant state of illumination. The mode in which this is best effected is as follows: four men respectively mount the four minarets, by the winding stairs within, each carrying with him one of the fireworks which the natives manufacture in such perfection. This he ignites upon arriving at the top. The effect seems magical. There is no scattering of sparks in pyrotechnic devices, but simply a sustained light, at once soft and brilliant. It is generally found most effective to burn a different colour at each corner, the blending of which is of almost inconceivable beauty. The varied radiance appears to pervade all objects far

and near. Over the tall minarets whence the light pours forth ; over the white terraced palace with its delicate dome ; over the fair gardens with their grand avenue of cypresses, shades of luxuriant tropical foliage, and bright blooming flowers ; over the winding Junna which washes one side of the terrace ; over the stately fort and the bridge of boats ; over the opposite shore dotted with mosques and temples ; even to the silent cantonment, where the British power is sleeping upon its sword. It is a sight not soon to be forgotten ; but as the light gradually dies away, and the Taj once more becomes ghost-like in the dark, there is another scene in preparation no less strange and beautiful.

We enter the tomb, and by the light of a feeble oil-lamp we see men high up near the dome, engaged in preparations, the nature of which are soon apparent. On a sudden a rose-coloured flame starts into life ; then a second, a third, and a fourth ; and in a brief minute, the dome, the walls, the floor, the sarcophagi in the centre and the screens around them,—all that wonderful interior of white marble and precious stones,—become illumined with an effect that may well seem born of supernatural power. Within the building there is no space for mingled hues. A single tint only may reign at one time ; but you may vary it, and see the rose give place to other colours and new charms. It is when the hall is thus filled with radiance, that music may be best brought to complete the spell. The voice raised in song will find an echo of mystic melody ; and the traveller who has brought with him the merest musical box, has a means of working enchantment upon the sense.

After beholding the Taj in this its greatest state of splendour, there remains nothing but to drive home and

dream. Next morning we may perhaps be tempted to discuss details which would be vulgar and obtrusive in the light of the moon, or the many-coloured tints of the workers in fire. By whom was the Taj designed? To what order does its architecture belong? These are questions to which the prudent visitor must submit, for they are certain to be asked elsewhere. It would be highly improper for him to declare that he was so bewildered, so intoxicated, by the result, as to care nothing for such particulars. Travelling has its duties as well as its rights, like property, and travellers must pretend, at any rate, to be well informed.

There are various stories afloat as to the men who made the Taj. An Italian architect—name unknown—generally gets the credit of it; and we are often told that this great triumph of Eastern art came from a Western head. But for this hypothesis there is no sufficient foundation. Native report is furnished with names and all particulars, and is at least as trustworthy as any other authority. From a native manuscript we gather the following:—

The person who designed the Taj was one Esaw. He is said to have come from Constantinople. The letters were inlaid by one Imarut Khan. He came from Persia. Each of these received one thousand rupees a month while the work was proceeding.

The head workman was Mahomed Huniz. He also had a thousand rupees a month; and Esaw besides received a present of five hundred rupees for mending the brass pinnacle on the top of the dome, which was broken in the course of erection.

The builder of the dome itself was Ishmael Khan. He received five hundred rupees a month. The bricklayers, stone-cutters, carpenters, &c., numbered from



six to nine thousand, according to the season of the year.

With regard to the architecture of the Taj, there is much difference of opinion ; but Mr. Bayard Taylor tells us that it is pure Saracenic, and he is about the best authority on the subject.

The materials of which the Taj was built were brought from far and near. The red cornelian came from Bagdad, the white from Greece; the turquoise from Great Thibet ; the lapis lazuli from Ceylon ; the coral from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf ; the onyx from the Dekhan ; the lahsanynia from the Nile ; the false ruby from the Ganges ; the payezur from Kumaon ; the amethyst from Surat ; the jasper from Kommajh ; the garnet from Gwalior ; the pudding-stone from Sind ; the agate from Arabia ; the bloodstone from Cambray ; the magnetic stone from Gwalior ; the white marble from Kashmere ; the yellow marble from Oodipore ; the black marble from Jusselmer ; the yellow stone from the country round Agra ; the red stone from Futtehpoore Sikhree.

Shah Jehan, it is said, made a measure of his own, called the Shah Jehan yard. One of his cubic yards of the white marble weighed nine maunds (a maund is eighty pounds) ; of the black marble, seven maunds. There were used in the building, twenty-eight maunds of blood-stone, ninety-five maunds of jasper, three maunds and a half of lapis lazuli, one hundred and thirty-nine maunds of red cornelian, and twelve maunds of coral. Most of the valuable stones, it may be remarked, were sent to the emperor as presents, or were taken as tribute from the several countries that he had conquered. I am afraid, indeed, that such a magnificent building as the Taj could never have been erected under the condition of being paid for. And yet the sum

which the work actually cost, according to the general belief, was no less than one million, seven hundred thousand pounds sterling.

It is generally believed that Shah Jehan, upon the completion of the Taj, intended to have built a similar mausoleum for the reception of his own remains, on the other side of the river, the two to be connected by a bridge with silver rails. That such an idea may have been entertained by this great monarch is probable enough; but I doubt whether the work was ever commenced, as is maintained by some local authorities. In any case the troubles in which the king was plunged before his death, through the rebellion of his sons, were quite sufficient to cause him to abandon the project.

In an open space near the river, within the enclosure of the Taj, is a large block of porous, so balanced on the plinth where it rests that it can be shaken to and fro, but cannot be dislodged from its position by the means. How it came there, and what its meaning may be, nobody knows; and the fact that no stone of the kind is produced in the country renders the matter still more mysterious. The only idea formed upon the subject is that, from its capacity to shake without falling, it is intended as an emblem of the empire, and as such, was probably pleasing to the king.

For the residents at Agra the Taj is not merely a "lion" to which they pay state visits when desirous to show it off, but an intimate friend, upon whom they continually call for the pure pleasure of its society, and with whom they spend weeks at a time. In the mornings and in the evenings there can surely be no pleasanter place for a walk than that terrace on the river side of the building, where a breeze is always to be found if breeze there be. And here, immediately bounding this

promenade, are two dwelling houses, which may be engaged of the accommodating authorities for a very small sum, for a day, or a longer period, according to convenience on both sides. To these come parties bent upon pleasure, and invalids in search of fresh air; and between the two they are seldom untenanted. I have heard some sensitive persons deprecate in severe terms the practice of holding such profane festivities as picnics, &c., in so sacred a place as a tomb. But it should be remembered that the Mahomedans, notwithstanding the reverence in which they hold the resting-places of the dead, do not express their feelings towards them in precisely the same manner as ourselves. In Agra there are many houses which are extensions of buildings formerly dedicated to the dead, and men see no harm in the living using them as dwelling-places. In many of the "compounds," or gardens, attached to the houses of Europeans, there are one or more tombs still existing, which nobody would dream of displacing, but which one is not expected to consider in domestic arrangements. The natives themselves, proud as they are of the Taj, make no scruple in turning it into a place of recreation; and every Sunday, Mahomedans as well as Hindoos make it a trysting place, where they congregate for pleasure; almost to the exclusion of their European allies, who seldom intrude upon them during the hours in which they may be considered to have made the place their own. Both the building and the grounds are maintained in excellent order at the expense of government, and I believe that not the most bigoted Mussulman begrudges the enjoyment derived from either the one or the other in consideration of the service thus rendered. Even dancing, in which our lively compatriots occasionally indulge upon the terrace and in the grounds, does

not appear to give any offence. No doubt the natives consider us utterly abandoned for dancing at all ; but if we choose to incur the degradation ourselves, instead of employing "professionals" to gratify us in that manner, they think we may as well do so at the Taj as elsewhere. Indeed, while they tolerate the gathering together of such very promiscuous company as compose the Sunday assemblies, it would be difficult to make any consistent objection to the festivities of the Europeans, which are after all never inconsistent with western ideas of order and propriety. It is true that we offend "the prejudices of the natives," to use the stock expression, in many ways. That we should hold the country by our troops, and govern it by our laws, is an inexcusable liberty in the first place. That we should profess a different religion is an insult added to the political injury. That we should indulge in our carnivorous appetites is a gross indignity to one portion of the population, who hold all animal life as sacred, and who consider that we have no right to kill a cobra whom we may find curled up in our bed. That we should degrade these appetites to the extent of eating the unclean animal, is a perpetual scandal to another class of the people. That we should have anything to do with wine or brandy-panee, is considered a great reproach by both classes in common ; though in their judgment upon us, in this, as in other respects, both classes are guilty of a great deal of hypocrisy. That we should allow our women to appear in public unveiled, is a standing source of sarcasm and contempt, which are no doubt, thoroughly genuine. In most of our ways, in fact, we offend the prejudices of the susceptible people among whom we are placed. But when we maintain their monuments as we do the Taj, and show our appreciation of their beauties by recreating ourselves

therein, we tend in some measure to redeem our general unpopularity, which owes its origin less to political than social sources.

I have omitted to mention—what, however must be known to most of my readers—that the heroine of Mr. Moore's ingenious poem of *Lalla Rookh*, is no less a person than the Banou Begum, buried in the Taj. Shah Jehan was a poet, and may therefore be easily supposed to have wooed her in the manner described. For the rest, the British author's descriptions will scarcely be accepted by travellers in the East.

## II.

## PROVINCIAL LIFE IN INDIA.

It is mainly from a home point of view, that life in India can be fairly estimated; and to fairly estimate life in India, everybody knows that we must go beyond Calcutta. The north-west may be taken as a fair specimen, and it is to the north-west that we address ourselves. The month or two passed in Calcutta scarcely prepares the new arrival—fresh from Europe—from England—from London—for the phenomena presented by an up-country station. In London he was of course lost—to an extent which makes a great many persons particularly desirous of never being found again. He had also imbibed Paris, and tasted possibly of the Rhine and Rome. From these passing influences he is seasonably roused by the overland journey. What new scenes and old associations are conjured up by the mere idea! But the overland journey is soon found to be a rush and a scramble, during which there is too much to see to permit one to observe, and too much to say to enable one to reflect. Calcutta is a crash and a glare, from which the new comer seeks refuge in silence and shadow, and finds them occasionally when he does not want them—under

a punkah. The north-west follows, and then come the stern realities of Indian life. We pass over the dâk—who would not pass over the dâk if he could?—and find the new arrival at his station. He is probably in the hey-day of the cold weather ; but he has of course a foretaste of his troubles. How dismal, for one who has recently parted from his “friends,”—to find himself transplanted to a place which, for Asiatic *ennui*, combined with European observances, has no parallel in any other country. An up-country station in India is an exception to everything. It reminds one of the desert, but wants its freedom. It suggests a foreign country, but imposes on us the cares of home. It exacts something of the etiquette of May Fair, but affords nothing of its varied intercourse. It is not like a country town, for it presents no facilities greater than the dâk for running away from it. It is not like a crowded city, for it does not allow one to remain ignorant of one’s next door neighbour. It is like nothing under the sun—an Indian sun of course excepted—but itself. It is a station—“only this and nothing more”—nor less.

The new comer of course feels and sees before he begins to experience and reflect. He feels that the weather is getting warmer every day, and he sees that he has now exhausted everything in the way of novelty which the place may contain. There is probably very little of natural beauty in the neighbourhood, and still less in the way of art, which can be recurred to with pleasure. He may of course be cast in a station which is an exception in this latter respect, and if so he is a fortunate man. He leaves his cards upon the society. He exchanges a few words with the people whom he finds at home, when he most likely labours under a consciousness of having nothing to say ; and he finds

himself "cutting" these same people when he meets them out, and continues to do so until he gets their faces by heart. He is asked to dinner here and there ; and through meeting the same faces so often at different houses, forgets occasionally, if he is at all absent, whose house he is in. The conversation for the most part is perfectly unintelligible to him. It abounds in terms and phrases with which he is unacquainted, and refers to persons whom he has never heard of, or not yet individualized in his mind. He sees two elderly gentlemen convulsed with laughter at some joke referring to a place called a "cutcherry," but what there is to laugh at he cannot make out. He puzzles himself in wondering what a cutcherry can possibly be. It is no doubt a slang term for something—he has read in Mrs. Mackenzie's book that people talk slang dreadfully in India. A cutcherry is probably some improper place—he has read in several books that the moral tone of society in India is very bad. Still, he wonders how two gentlemen can make such allusions in the presence of ladies, and is sorry to see that two or three of the latter are laughing as much as anybody. He will certainly write home and tell his friends about it : he feels himself already gaining an experience of the country. So he sits quietly, having transacted the necessary courtesy demanded of him by the young lady on his right, by making three observations—two sensible ones and a failure,—and receiving from her three observations in return—two failures and a sensible one. Even this kind of conversation he has found it difficult to keep up. He cannot ask if ~~she~~ she has been to the opera lately ; nor is it of any use to say anything about the Chiswick Fête ; and he has not arrived at that degree of confidence—which requires middle age and immoveable features—which



would enable him to ask, "which do you prefer, muffins or crumpets?"—a question which we remember being put by a "bold bad man," in London, to an astounded female stranger. He has a half belief that the orthodox enquiry may be, "which do you prefer, the Regular or the Irregular Cavalry?" but not being quite sure, does not hazard it. It may be therefore inferred, that his three remarks are limited to the weather and the *dâk*; and then perhaps the weather again. He does not apply himself particularly to the dinner, for he has not courage to ask in public for what he wants under their native names, and has been prematurely abashed by receiving a knife when he thought he had asked for a spoon—a kind of mistake which a great many persons in India think highly distinguished, and which indeed we have seen affected by persons who, from certain indications of local coloring, we should say had known Europe only in the capacity of visitors. But of course our friend has not arrived at this triumphant point of experience. So he sits quietly; looks up at the punkah; mixes his wine rather injudiciously; takes notice of the ladies' dresses, if he is critical in such matters, and wonders what his sisters, whom he has seen a few weeks before in the first blush of the last mode, would think of them. He looks too at the gentlemen's dress, decides that there is not an orthodox collar at the table, and wonders where the civilians get those extraordinary coats. Then he looks up at the punkah again, and only half listens to the conversation. He starts fervently on somebody addressing him, and has a suspicion that he has been—only for an instant—asleep. Then there is a buzz, and the ladies leave. The principal difference made by this event is—that the ladies have left. There is very little accession to the conversation. It is just a little more free perhaps.

A subaltern, for instance, informs his immediate neighbour that his commanding officer is an ass; and our friend hears for the first time that a distinguished colonel of cavalry, with a name high in public estimation, cannot ride:—"You should see how he grasped his holster pipes yesterday—it was a rich treat." This is the extent perhaps of the license: very little more wine is taken, and there is not so much sitting over it as even in England in these decorous days. The remainder of the proceedings are soon over. Nobody is going anywhere else, except a bachelor or two to a mess perhaps; and these light up furtive cheroots in the verandah, and mount, it may be, dog-carts of a flagrant character, which they could not very well keep waiting for them in a genteel London thoroughfare.

A few weeks pass over, and our young friend has become an old Indian. It is wonderful by the way what an old Indian one becomes in a few weeks, and what a young Indian one remains in a few years. But he is an old Indian in his own estimation, which is sufficient: if everybody only succeeded in satisfying himself, there would be no necessity to please others. He knows his own servants by sight, which is a great triumph, for at first all the natives resemble one another like a flock of sheep. He can also ask for what he wants with tolerable facility; has got a house all to himself; has tried a hookah, which he will abandon when the novelty has passed, as nearly everybody does now, and begins precociously to abuse the country. Of course these symptoms are heightened or modified by circumstances—whether he is a military or a civil service "Griff," or neither,—and in either case he may fall into extremes, either of books or billiards,

and be successful or unsuccessful in life, according to the chances common to all climates and conditions.

But our Griff is not beginning to moralize as yet. He is looking about him, and is prepared to make the best of everything he sees and hears. His first mania is most probably for amusement. He knows everybody in a formal manner, and has made a few intimate acquaintances—these are manufactured in a few hours in India. He is determined to rush into the vortex of society—to give himself up to the giddy whirl for a time, before he takes seriously to study—which he has several times resolved to commence “the first thing on Monday morning,” and has then postponed to the first of next month—by way of beginning in a regular manner. He is ready for the rush, but where is the vortex? It is plain that he will not find it by staying at home, so he resolves to go and call upon some of the leaders of fashion, and hear what is going on. At the first house where he makes the enquiry, he receives the well known answer that there is nothing at all, and that everything is more dismal than ever. Are there no balls coming off? This question causes absolute laughter. Why, there has been no ball since the Queen’s birthday, and there is no chance of another. The last was a failure, because the brigadier insisted upon full dress, and the officers were too hot to dance; and because it had been “got up” by two or three of the wrong people; and because Mrs. A——’s box, which she had been expecting for seven months from England, had not “come up,” and she had no ball dress, and therefore stayed at home; and because Mrs. B——, whose box *had* come up, and who had a beautiful ball dress, wasn’t allowed by her husband to dance; and because Mrs. C——, who was the best dancer in the

station, took it into her head to sit still all the evening, after filling up her card about six times over; and because the D——'s, who were always interfering with people's amusement, (it's very fortunate they have left the station since,) chose to give a dinner party on the same night, and detained their guests until they were thoroughly fatigued, with the exception of a desperate youth or two, who would go anywhere at any hour; and because several ladies stayed away for reasons of their own, and several other ladies stayed away for reasons of somebody else's; and because the refreshments were bad; and accordingly nobody enjoyed themselves except the gentlemen who stayed to the second supper, and they paid dearly enough for their amusement the next day.

This is not cheering. But our Griff, still bent upon rushing into the vortex of society, is not daunted. He speaks to two or three influential men upon the subject of a possible ball—there are always two or three men in a station who manage these matters. The first application is encouraging. Captain Warble thinks that things are not “ripe” for the purpose, and besides, is of opinion that the civilians ought to “do something” this time, and that “some of those fellows who are drawing four or five thousand a month” ought to *give* balls instead of making people subscribe for them. Our Griff next proceeds to Rapid, a subaltern, who is always ready for anything. He has always a good following in whatever he proposes, and is a general favorite. Rapid is evidently the right man, and Griff finds him in the right place—*i. e.*, at home. Rapid is just taking his first cheroot of the day (and his last but two, for he is not one of your dissipated men) and thinking of Miss Myrtle, the judge's daughter, whom he has met out the

night before, and in whose favour he is understood to be a "gone coon"—in the objectionable phraseology of some of his friends. She has on that occasion expressed her wish that somebody would "get up a ball," and he is just meditating upon the subject. The suggestion of Griff is therefore singularly à propos. They agree to go and rout up old Warble, and make him join. The result is promising. Warble is open to conversion, and (after tiffin) is of opinion that the thing may be done if the Browns and Joneses can be induced to come, and the Robinsons can be guaranteed to stay away. Rapid is not a man to be daunted; so without more delay he gets a sheet of foolscap, and writes the proposition for a subscription ball neatly at the top, with a request that those disposed to join will put down their names, or at any rate not omit to write the word "seen." Then he puts the important document, big with the fate of so many polkas and deux temps, into a long envelope, with the words "In circulation" written outside, and a long list of names, and hurries off with it in his buggy, to get the signature of the brigadier and some "big civilian" to head the subscriptions—for though the virtual originators of the festivity, it would be death to the design were either of our three friends to assume the lead. These preliminaries are soon achieved—the "brig" merely observing that he doesn't care much for these things, but will make a point of going, and the big civilian putting his name down without dreaming of being present, but with a vague notion that he is doing something for "the masses," and that property has its duties as well as its rights. The severe test is to follow, and this, as fortune wills it, is successful. Some fifty or sixty persons put down their names, and of these about half may be expected to bring ladies.

Of course these are all persons of recognized position in society, and who know more or less of one another. But it may be that some are invited over from out-stations, to swell the number, and to give that appearance of strangers among the old faces, which conveys one of the most refreshing sensations that the Mofussil can afford, and is comparable to nothing but the first sparkle of the desert spring, or the first experience of any of those pleasant things of which poets delight to sing.

For the next few days, all the station who have subscribed to the ball are on the *qui vive* about their toilettes—except indeed the absurdly opulent people who have everything in fabulous quantities from home; and even they have occasionally to endure the misfortunes to which all in this life are subject—especially if they rely upon the bullock train. All the available gloves in the station are bought up, as the first preliminary, and there is a rush made upon the wretched milliner, who has been neglected for the last three months. The gloves are of course all of the wrong sizes—the white ones are spotted with yellow, and the yellow ones are stained with white, owing to exposure to the air, and it may be a dash of sea water, and at least half of them break disastrously at the seams on first being put on, through the same causes, joined to the dry heat up the country, which has operated as a pleasing variety. Now it is that ladies who have hitherto been remarkable for a degree of amiability for which “doveline” conveys but a faint idea, begin to tell their husbands respectively that it was all nonsense putting down their names, for they have nothing to go in, and they (the husbands) know it. A mild man, perhaps, out of the number, suggests

some existing dress which does not seem<sup>t</sup> used up—and which he thinks “rather swell than otherwise” as eligible at the crisis; but we need scarcely say that he is promptly put down, as his ignorant conduct deserves. As if indeed *that* thing would do, which everybody has seen, and when the so-and-so’s will be there, who give themselves such airs because they are just out from England, and the somebody-elses, who have just got their box out, which is the next best thing! Of course the monster subsides, as in duty bound, and retreats to his own room, which presently begins to give forth a slight odour of tobacco, and from which a pop, something like the opening of a soda water bottle, is probably heard, accompanied by a splutter, the result of a furtive effort to open it gently—blundered of course by that ass of a servant! This, it should be remembered, is an individual case—we should be very sorry to represent it as a specimen of Anglo-Indian manners generally.

The great night arrives. Soon after, our friend Griff arrives also—at the public rooms where the ball is held, and where he is one of the first. The scene is not one of enchantment, such as he had imagined a ball to be in the gorgeous East—the land of the sun, of birds and flowers, and jewels and odours, and houris fairer than all of these. There is an uninhabited look about the place, which can be accounted for only by the appearance being founded upon fact. The walls look white-washed—for the reason that they are so, and there is an air of desolation, which the presence of seven persons does not altogether dissipate. There are plenty of lights, however, and the canvass is stretched with admirable tightness upon the floor—signs of the activity of the stewards, and delightful for dancing purposes. It is half-past

nine. The seven persons who make desolation the more apparent, are all men. They are all courting the refreshments, and Griff joins them for want of something better to do. Presently a new party arrives—two of them are ladies. Then another party—one is a lady. Three ladies are usually considered a quorum in the Mofussil, and the band begins to play. Scarcely has the first dance begun when two more parties, mustering five ladies, drop in with desperate vigour—and the ball is in full swing. Our Griff is in the vortex of society, and yields himself to the gay abandonment of the scene. More people arrive, including more ladies, until the number of the latter actually rises to seventeen. The men by this time at least half fill the rooms, and the enchantment is at its height. Up to the period of half-past twelve Griff experiences an unsettled feeling, as if the ball had only just begun; but when once he is certain that no more guests—ladies especially—need be expected, and he is assured on the authority of several of the stewards that the occasion is *not* a failure, he surrenders himself to sensations of mad exhilaration, and is determined to “make it a personal matter” with any man who says he is not enjoying himself immensely. Whether he *does* enjoy himself or not of course depends upon circumstances apart from the mere appliances and means of enjoyment. The most magnificent balls are usually voted “slow” by some of the guests, and the most hopelessly wretched occasions are found delightful by others. At the ordinary Mofussil ball it must be confessed that there are difficulties to surmount of which few men are master. It needs considerable animal spirits to compete for a partner with twenty different men, and requires something approaching philosophy to feel perfectly contented after *not* succeeding, which must



be the fate of nineteen out of the number. The probabilities are that Griff has not been sufficiently *au fait* to make his engagements beforehand—which the old hands always do—and so succeeds only in getting a stray partner here and there, who has been neglected, or forgotten; but let us hope that he enjoys himself, and is thoroughly satisfied that he is being carried away in the vortex of society.

The supper is not likely to be a brilliant affair. It is more useful than ornamental, and unfortunately very few persons wish to make use of it. However, the ladies let off cracker bon-bons, and laugh over the mottoes in the approved style, and sip champagne, and flirt mildly, and seem to like the proceeding rather than otherwise. A candid young person fresh from home will occasionally give out, in a more or less marked manner, that it is not the sort of thing that she has been accustomed to, but everybody, fortunately, does not hear her, so that the heretical opinion does not interfere with the amusement of the rest. At half-past one or two, the people disperse, all heartily tired, whether with exerting themselves too little or too much, and perhaps the former is the more fatiguing of the two. A few unprincipled persons usually remain behind, and indulge in that most reprehensible proceeding—a second supper—which some hardened wretches are actually heard to declare is the best part of the evening. At these horrible feasts, not only are all sorts of devilled and anchovied arrangements freely indulged in, but beer is drunk, not wisely but too well,—in which respect it differs from the comic songs, which are sung neither wisely *nor* too well—an arrangement, however, which has its advantage, as it prevents the singer from being asked to sing them over again.

After his maiden attempt, our Griff is not likely to be in a great hurry to rush into the vortex again, but is usually content with a whirl of mild amusements, which cheer but not inebriate. It is possible that a dramatic fit comes over him, and that he yearns to fret his hour upon the stage. He has of course a notion that he can play Hamlet (we never knew an amateur who didn't believe *that*), and a latent conviction that he is born to be the best Richard on the boards. He joins the Thespian Club of the station, on the strength of this understanding that he has arrived at—with himself. The delusion is very speedily dissipated, or at any rate he soon ceases to have any idea of acting upon it.

The fact is, that Shakespeare and the legitimate dramatists do not flourish in India. Nor is it surprising that they do not, when it is remembered that complete professional companies at home cannot make them popular with the public. Even in Calcutta, where an occasional professional or two come out upon speculation, for the apparent purpose of assuring themselves of the fact that it "doesn't answer," the strictly illegitimate drama alone affords them a chance. In the north-west how is it possible that any serious or sustained performance can succeed, when the female parts are feminine only as far as the petticoats are concerned, and the softer sex is usually represented as rather the harder of the two? Even when a professional lady has "starred it" up the country, which has been very rarely, she has belonged as essentially to the "heavy walks" of the drama as the elephant at Astley's, and inclines to such parts as Mrs. Haller (our *bête noir* of the British stage) and can never be made to play in any piece in which she has not to be seduced

herself, or do something desperate to somebody else. The consequence is, that these ladies have not been very successful, and few are found to follow in their footsteps. So the amateur companies get on by themselves as well as they can. Of these the greater numbers are composed of the soldiers of the European regiments—of which nearly every one in India has its theatrical company. In some stations these coalesce with the officers and other gentlemen; in others, this latter class form a company by themselves. In the north-west the buildings used for the theatres are sometimes built expressly for the purpose: in other cases they are old barracks, or any other convenient or inconvenient edifice, adapted to the purpose; and as may be supposed, they do not always remind one of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. The dramas represented—always strictly illegitimate, as we have said—vary according to taste. The soldiers invariably select a real Surrey melodrama, containing a profligate nobleman; a rapacious landlord, *i.e.*, a landlord with a prejudice in favor of getting his rent; a faithful lover, in more or less humble life; a haughty lady of title who is found to have made a *faux pas* in her youth, and whose own son turns up eventually, minus his h's, but with most enlightened sentiments about the nobility of nature; a virtuous heroine who makes the profligate nobleman ashamed of himself; and a great deal of red fire, which eventually makes everything *colour de rose*, as is usual when virtue is triumphant in real life. In addition to this, there is probably a “screaming farce,” and as many comic songs and sailor’s horn-pipes as can be crammed into the evening’s entertainment.

Among the “gentleman amateurs” the farce, screaming or otherwise, forms the staple of the *repertoire*,

except when, such a piece as "Used Up" (which piece has perhaps been played more often than any other in India) can be found available. But this is of course not often, for "Used Up" is one of the best specimens of its class ever put upon the stage. A writer in a home periodical—whose article we have happened to meet with while writing these pages—remarks with a profundity of observation worthy of a better cause, that it is always the weakness of at least one gentleman amateur in every company, to believe that he can play Sir Charles Coldstream rather better than Charles Matthews. We have known instances in which two or three gentlemen belonging to one company have each held the same opinion; which of course leads to exhibitions of a far more professional character than anything the amateurs can do on the stage. These aspirants are usually rather fresh from England, and possessed of the most recent coats and waistcoats, without which, it must be confessed, the character is apt to lose a great deal of *vraisemblance*; for it is evident to the meanest capacity among the audience, that the traditionary swell of the British stage, with the military stripe to his trowsers, whom the waiting maid usually finds so irresistible, is not the Sir Charles that Matthews has immortalized. We are bound to say, however, that we have seen the character admirably performed by amateurs in the north-west, and that whatever faults there might have been in their performances, were on the right side, as far as good taste is concerned. They generally *under*-played the part, refined too much, both in dress and manner—forgetting that a little breadth and exaggeration are indispensable on the stage. In fact they were too much like the Sir Charles Coldstreams of real life to convey the requisite

dramatic effect, and their performance „seemed *pale* behind the lights, just as their cheeks would have seemed pale had they not been rouged.

But we are criticising rather prematurely, it being our intention to take the reader to the theatre (in the company of our Griff) and let him judge for himself. The theatre to which we will conduct him is not one of the best in the north-west, as far as the building is concerned. It is a fair average specimen, and therefore better worthy his attention. It is a condemned barrack, this home of the drama, but it is not depressed by its condemnation, for it never looked half so well in its original character. Our distinguished party arrives early, in order to form a fair estimate of the place before the performance commences. “Early” means about half-past eight, the performance commencing at nine. Being strangers, of course we have been losing our way, and have nearly driven our buggy into a ditch; but the sounds of the commencing overture, and the light which streams from the open doors, have guided us in safety to the spot. Outside there is a great concourse of vehicles and horses, the latter taken out and made comfortable for the evening—crowds of soldiers and mysterious persons who are never seen but on these occasions, and stalls for the sale of ginger beer and other unintoxicating refreshments, chiefly for the benefit of the soldiers. A great many of the gentlemen who have come *en garçon* have the materials for “pegs” in their buggies, with perhaps a basket of ice sent beforehand; and these persons, we need not say, are highly popular with their friends. Indeed their practice may be commended on the strictest grounds of prudence, for they do more than prepare for a rainy day, by providing for a “wet night.”

The interior of the theatre is, as may be supposed, of the Early Barrack order of architecture—that is to say, the room is long and straight—rather narrow for its length, but sufficiently lofty. The stage is at one end, and the seats are ranged across the room, divided by partitions into first boxes, second boxes, and gallery. The seats are all chairs, the private property of the individuals composing the audience, who have sent them from their houses during the day. They are carefully labelled with the names of their respective owners, and arranged according to their various degrees of dignity, unless in compliance with special arrangements. Of course the brigadier and the civilians of high degree get the best places, while the ordinary run of distinguished persons are planted promiscuously. This is as far as the first boxes are concerned. No class of persons are actually excluded from these places who choose to pay for them; but in India different classes are so separated generally by custom, that they separate themselves by instinct upon these occasions; and the distinction, not too strictly carried out, doubtless makes evereboddy more comfortable. So the second class of persons find themselves serenely content in the second boxes, where they can see just as well as in the first; and the soldiers and kindred subordinates make themselves uproariously at their ease in the gallery, where they can command the whole house. These various human elements being assembled, general attention is directed to the drop-scene, which, like the scenery generally, is rough and ready, and is probably the work of a private soldier. The subject is a view of a very blue bay, with very yellow sand, and very green trees; buildings of a pleasing white; and a mountain thrusting itself ostentatiously out of the back ground, and emit-

ting smoke. We need not the classic-looking peasantry in the foreground—one of whom is talking to somebody else's wife on the trunk of a fallen tree, another of whom is fishing and evidently not caring about catching anything, and the rest of whom are sprawling miscellaneously in the shade—to tell us that Naples is the bay and Vesuvius the mountain. We are just remarking the peculiar perspective which the artist has employed in the composition, and thinking that if nature was arranged upon the same principles, the bay would infallibly pour itself into the orchestra, and the mountain come toppling down upon the heads of the first boxes, when the bell rings and the curtain rises upon a "screaming farce."

The next moment we are in the presence of Buckstone. There can be no mistake. The appearance is unmistakable, the voice beyond all dispute, and the conduct identity itself. No other man ever carried his countenance to such lengths of comedy; no other man ever made so much fun out of the inflexions of his voice; no other man ever allowed himself to be made such a fool of by his wife, or blundered with such an irresistible combination of shrewdness and inanity when he wanted to transgress upon his own account. The evidence of the play bill is to the effect that the character is played by Lieutenant \* \* \* of the \* \* Regiment, but this anybody may believe who pleases—we believe the man to be Buckstone, and although temporarily shaken in our conviction by the man coming to the front of the house, when the piece is concluded, and sitting beside us, in a red jacket with the well-known facing of the \* \* th, and asking us whether we will go to supper at the mess of that gallant corps when all is over, we are still under the impression that it *is* Buckstone, or else—

which is the modification we submit to, the next morning—or else a very good imitation of him.

In the same manner we see Keeley. In the same manner we see Wright. All these men have their representatives—and very good representatives too—in India, among officers fresh from furlough, who have made good use of their evenings in London. We have seen Wright blunder more at sitting upon a lady's bonnet, or performing the other pleasant farcical feat of smashing a baby in a chest of drawers, than several officers whom we could name, at station theatres in the north-west. The proverbial cowardice of Keeley, too, (we are speaking of course in a professional sense,) we have seen emulated in India in a manner that most infallibly would have lost the actor his commission, had he exhibited it in half so natural a manner in his private life. The great difficulty, as we have said, is with the female parts. But it is wonderful—the way in which the difficulty is occasionally overcome. As regards “the men,” it is of course difficult to make them very ladylike, but they contrive to be very like possible ladies, and although it must be confessed they do not readily accommodate themselves to the nice conduct of crinoline, and do make broad strides, and pitch their voices in an unseemly manner—still they accomplish most of the requirements of female impersonation, with a degree of success that would scarcely be expected, and which is almost as much as is required for a broad farce. But the great success is attained when a clever Griff is caught for the purpose. It will not do to catch him too young, because he is then apt to be nervous, and although his “getting up” may be unexceptionable, he is apt to spoil the entire performance by running off the stage almost as soon as he has been dragged on to it



It is an unfortunate fact, indeed, that confidence seldom comes before whiskers, and that when a man is possessed of both, he will not always exhibit the one at the expense of the other. But when confidence develops a little in advance, and whiskers are not in his way—it is surprising how successful a female part can be made, despite the difficulties of sex. The performer of course lays his female friends under contribution for costume, and, it is said, gets them to dress him occasionally—but this we don't believe. He certainly contrives to get dressed somehow, and often very well dressed. And we have seen gentlemen in India act in a more really lady-like manner than some "female parties" who are on the stage at home.

We need not further accompany our friend through the evening's entertainment, the nature of which the reader can form some estimate of by this time. The class upon whom it produces the greatest effect, is of course the natives; and it is to be feared that the European name is not elevated in their eyes by the exhibition. But we are fortunately not yet weak enough in the country to fear any amount of contempt which may be incurred by military officers and solemn civil functionaries arising from no graver cause than this, and we must make up our minds to pocket the affront, as we do the public opinion which looks upon dancing as somewhat infamous, when we do *not* do it by deputy, according to the eastern custom.

The general habits of life of residents in the north-west have been variously criticised, because they have been variously understood. The mistake usually made, is to select individuals, and to consider them as representing classes. We should no more take the model civilian, who spends ten hours a day in his cutcherry,

never smokes, drinks nothing stronger than a glass or two of champagne at dinner, and is ten years behind the age in his shirt collars, and general information, as a type of Indian Society, than we should take the traditional subaltern who has been so often described, who shirks every kind of duty, professional and social, as much as he can, and whose life is principally made up of "pegs" and promises to pay.

We doubt whether these two popular objects of satire could ever be accepted as types, but they certainly cannot in the present day, when a marked improvement in the tone of society has taken place in India. It is true that we do still meet with specimens of what we may call, in a beery metaphor, the "country bottled" classes. The civilian who has never been home, and who can talk nothing but shop, is still to be met with in the north-west. Also the "pegging" style of subaltern, whose conversation is half Hindustani and half slang, and nearly all sporting, who has no chance of ever getting home, and whose great object in life is to qualify himself for sick leave to the hills, which he gets at last for a longer period than he expects. But it must be admitted that these specimens are not numerous, and that they are fast becoming more rare. As a general rule, society in the north-west is at least as intellectual as the same rank of society at home, and despite dozens of reasons why it should not be so. The climate is of course the great difficulty, but we deny that it is the great demoralizer that some writers seem to imagine. Who has not read in English as well as Indian periodicals, a description of a hot day? The resident in the north-west is usually described as getting up at daybreak; hurrying on his clothes and taking a gallop with a cheroot; calling in at the coffee shop to talk shop and scandle; returning home to bathe

and breakfast off mountains of curry, and fish, and eggs, all jumbled together; looking in at his cutcherry (we are supposing the case of a civilian) for an hour or two, and knocking off some routine business; returning to a tiffin consisting of piles of turkey and ham, curry and rice, washed down by unlimited beer, qualified with sundry glasses of sherry; then going to sleep for a couple of hours; waking up in time for the evening drive; returning with just strength enough to dress and dine off more turkey, and ham, and curry, washed down with champagne, perhaps, instead of beer; and immediately afterwards going to bed under a punkah. Descriptions which we have read of the lives of military men are even worse than this. In a recent work it is asserted that after parade, when his work may be considered over for the day, the usual practice of an officer of the Indian army is, to bathe, and dress of course; then to breakfast heavily; then to undress deliberately and go to sleep, after a mild attempt to read a volume of the "Parlour Library;" to wake up at one or two o'clock to a heavy tiffin and a fabulous amount of beer; then to undress and go to sleep again, this time without any such apology as the "Parlour Library;" to rise and dress for the inevitable evening drive, and to return again to a heavy dinner, and bed almost immediately.

We need not enter into elaborate speculations upon the probabilities of such a mode of life being adopted by a gentleman of only moderate intelligence, under any circumstances of climate and confinement. But we ask any of our readers in the north-west, whether they are accustomed to spend their days in the manner described? They will inevitably answer that they are not. We ask them, then, how many of their friends or acquaintances they can point to, as coming within the catagory? We

doubt whether they can point to any whose habits even approximate to those stated to be general in the north-west. As for any man's habits answering *literally* to the description, the notion is mere nonsense. But it should not be forgotten, that the above is meant to apply to the steady and respectable officer of the Indian army, a married man perhaps. Who, after that, can describe the habits of the dissipated specimens of the class? The last attempt of the kind has just been made in a popular periodical at home. The article has already been so well described by a north-west journal, that we cannot do better than follow the writer's account.

"Mr. Go-a-head Griffin, the hero of the sketch, is an ensign in the Seringapatam Slashers, quartered at Burragurrumpore. This station, we infer from its heat and the variety of corps quartered there, is intended for Cawnpore. At all events, it is some large cantonment, the seat of a brigade, in the Upper Provinces. In large cantonments there is always something 'going on,' even during the hot winds. That something is certainly not much, but it might interest European readers. In the article before us, there is positively nothing of the kind. Sleeping and drinking are the occupations of Mr. Griffin, and his twenty-four hours are so wholly eventless, that we wonder why a narration of them has been given to the public. Here is a summary of the article, and the reader may judge of it for himself.

"The hero, Mr. Griffin, is introduced to us in bed. A sleeping hero may make a fine picture, but not when he has been tinsy overnight, and mosquito-bitten till morning. This is Mr. Griffin's condition, and he is, moreover, the victim of hideous dreams, caused by the wailing of a pack of jackals. This awakes him, and in starting up he knocks his head against the punkah. Of course he

must have a cheroot after this. Further attempts to sleep are frustrated by the mosquitoes, and the laziness of the punkah cooly. At last, Mr. Griffin, after vainly expostulating with that functionary as a 'sleepy son of an owl,' and a 'lazy, good-for-nothing black pig,' jumps up and gives him a sousing and a kick, which last operation merely hurts the inflictor's foot. The result of these annoyances is a glass of brandy-pawnee, which is the first 'tot' of the subaltern's eventful day.

"The brandy-pawnee, and castigation of the cooly, enable Griffin to sleep till gun-fire, when he is dragged to consciousness by his bearer. Griffin remonstrates, but the bearer is stern. The Fates have decreed that he must get up; and another minister of the Fates enters in the person of the khitmutghar, who brings a cup of tea. Encouraged by this assistance, the stern bearer forces on his master's socks. Mr. Griffin, who appears to be a slave in the hands of his menials, is thus forcibly ousted from his bed, and is at last sent forth by the mandate 'your lordship's horse is at the door,' to parade. Thus, by the combined influence of bearer, khitmutghar, and syce, this officer and gentleman proceeds to do his duty.

"We have not space for the description of parade, but we perceive that Mr. Griffin performs the spirited manœuvre of sneaking round to the rear to escape notice. After parade he attends orderly room, and returns home, visiting *en route* a Parsee shop, where he imbibes a curaçoa 'peg.' This is his second dram before breakfast, which he preludes by a feast of mangoes. After an hour with his moonshee, Griffin dresses, and sits down to a breakfast consisting of 'curry, omelette, fish, rice, eggs, jam, and bottled beer.' After breakfast he discusses a cheroot, and quietly goes to sleep.

"The next episode is a round of visits. 'Tired of his

own society, which he finds excessively stupid, Griffin orders his buggy, and determines to brave both sun and heat in search of a little excitement.' After the breakfast, and its antecedents, we are not surprised to find him, at the first house where he calls, 'hopelessly entangled in the furniture,' and 'upsetting a table in his way.' That he was ever admitted is indeed matter for surprise, for we should imagine most people to have been as tired of his society as he was himself. After his visits, he adjourns to the mess, where he meets a congenial character, Sponge of the Artillery, and having won a gold mohur of him, invites Sponge to tiffin. The tiffin consists of an awful 'devil' in which mustard, cayenne, Worcestershire sauce, West India pickle, and other irritating ingredients, are mixed. This awful compound is washed down with 'a cup' and some more brandy-pawnee. After this, Griffin, who is now reasonably obfuscated, proceeds to the band. We here get the following elegant *morceau* of description. 'Arriving at where the band is playing, he goes the round of the carriages *filled with lolling mem-sahibs*, dressed in mediæval fashions, and *looking rather dissipated*.' From these 'dissipated' characters Griffin works his way to the carriage containing the belle of the station, 'a handsome, overdressed girl, the only spinster for a hundred miles round.' This handsome overdressed girl is, however, destined to marry the commissioner, 'a dried up old gentleman, who owns, lucky girl! lacs of rupees, and luckier still, an inflamed liver.' Why should a commissioner be dried up, and why, of all men, should he own an inflamed liver?

"Last episode of all is dinner. It is a mess night, and Griffin invites his friend Sponge. Neither of them have an appetite, which, considering their 'devil' and

*its concomitants, is not surprising. Griffin makes a hearty meal of a quail roasted in vine leaves, and prawn curry, while Sponge only feels himself equal to an ortolan and plaintain fritter. The liquids, however, are done full justice to, especially by our two friends, who by the time of cheroot lighting are tolerably far gone. After dinner they indulge themselves with billiards, brandy-pawnee, and 'pegs,' and wind up with *vingt-et-un*, grilled bones, and iced beer, the result of which is, that 'Griffin' is put to bed by his bearer in a condition of utter helplessness, the united effect of heat and dissipation, where he will snooze away half the day in a miserable state, having taken the precaution the evening before, in expectation of a 'wet night,' to ask for leave from parade, on the plea of being indisposed, which he certainly was."*

We agree with the writer in considering Griffin 'to be a vacuous young snob, and in indignantly denying that he can be accepted as a specimen of the officers of the Indian army. But none of our readers in India require to be told that. The mischief which such gross caricatures do, is at home; and there, we have no doubt, the description of the vacuous young snob will be accepted as a correct picture of military life in the Mofussil. People in India need scarcely be told of the many young officers who, so far from conducting themselves like Griffin, pass the mildest and most monotonous existence that can be conceived. There are in the (late) Company's army at the present moment, some of the most tremendous martial fellows, who would be a positive terror to the civilians of an English country town, who are vegetating in the country not merely upon their pay—which is bad enough—but upon their pay "cut" it may be, in half, in order to liquidate the cost of very

excusable debts incurred at the outset of their career, or for the purchase of "steps," the benefits of which they enjoy only in the future. These young men—believe it or not as you please, young ladies in England, who imagine gaiety and profusion as inseparable from military life—these young men debar themselves from every luxury, and from nearly all enjoyment. They do not belong to the mess, or did not until they were compelled to do so, and now they spend as little money there as possible. They live in houses only half furnished, three or four of them together sometimes; ride little tats which would make people in England laugh; do not subscribe to the ice concern, nor to the mutton club, nor to a book club. They run up no bills in the station for those pickled pleasantries imported in tins from England. Their table is of the simplest, and even beer is not copiously indulged in. In nine cases out of ten, when one of those notices of "something going on," is making the round of the station, they do not subscribe, but content themselves by writing the word "seen" after their names. A ball on the Queen's birthday perhaps brings them out; for they have a great notion of matters of duty; and recognize such occasions as one of them. They accordingly involve themselves in an occasional affair of the kind (to the extent of some seven rupees eight annas) and think that they have "come out" amazingly. But these are red letter days in their lives, which are principally passed in getting up in the morning in time for parade, grinding away half the day at the native languages, dining early, and going to bed early, after a copious libation of weak tea. Once or twice a week, perhaps, they partake of this refreshment with a married officer of the regiment, who is going through a similarly prudent regime—a couple who not



being able to "entertain," and whose society is not considered to repay gratuitous politeness, are seldom invited out by the big people, and live in a state of domestic mystery, which is additionally humiliating from the fact, that the outer world shows no curiosity concerning it. It is rather unjust to reputable and useful, if not brilliant and conspicuous, members of society like these, to be associated in the general condemnation of the class, by writers who have made the "extravagance and profligacy of Indian life" almost proverbial.

We have alluded but little to the civilians—officially so described—who form so important a part of society in the north-west. They are of course included in the strictures of writers who have described that society; but of course, whatever their degree of importance, they are in a numerical minority, and are therefore not so concerned as their military brethren in the verdict which has been from time to time passed upon it. The fact is, that the civilians receive such large pay, and have so much to do, that they are not exposed in any way to the same temptations as military officers. In a north-west station they are generally found to be highly valuable members of society. Upon them devolves the principal portion of the duty of "entertaining," and as a general rule, it must be admitted that they perform that duty most hospitably. It is, to be sure, a common complaint in up-country stations, that the festivities are usually confined to "heavy dinners"—a ball or a pic-nic being a rare exception. But it should be remembered that civilians are but men, and that they are seldom rich enough, or important enough to entertain the whole station at once, until they have gained a gravity of years that renders the wilder pleasures less congenial to them than at a period when—they used to make the same

complaints of other people. Nor is the weakness peculiarly Indian. People at home seldom give balls after they have ceased to enjoy them themselves, unless for some particular object. A public man is glad to increase his connexion and popularity. A private gentleman has a daughter or two to marry. These are among the main reasons why people give balls at home. In the north-west, what public man cares about popularity, except with the government? His position is made. It will never be improved by his wife receiving crowds of people whom she joins with him in not caring about. A daughter or two to marry,—need a man of any position in the north-west trouble himself to give balls on that account? Daughters to marry are rare birds indeed, and any one with the usual number of eyes, and who hasn't a hump, may (as Mr. Thackeray has said more generally) marry any man she pleases. The difficulty is to keep the suitors off. No: it is evident that "a party" in the north-west that is not a dinner party, is the reverse of what political parties have been said to be—it is the madness of the few for the gain of the many, and it is not to be wondered at, that the few do not go mad more often than they do. This stern state of things is greatly to be regretted, because amid the heat and *ennui* of the Mofussil, pleasures become duties, in fact, and not merely in the sense in which the French say the English make them so. And any pleasures which do not consist in eating and drinking are grand discoveries, and should be cultivated and encouraged by every man. The *ennui*, far more than the heat, is the bane of up-country life. It is true that pig-sticking and shooting can always be found at convenient distances from most stations. It is true that there are always cards and billiards to be had. Sometimes sky

racés, sometimes archery. But with the exception of cards and billiards, these recreations are not to be had exactly when a man wants them. He cannot always drown his private wretchedness in pig-sticking. Perhaps he is not a pig-sticker, perhaps there are no pigs. He cannot always forget his yearnings after the ideal in going after birds. He may not be a shot, and there may not be any birds. In any case he cannot always get leave when he wants it. Cards and billiards have their temptations and dangers, and besides, may not suit a man's taste. The same objection applies more or less to sky races and archery. What is a man to do then? Read and improve his mind, it may be answered. True, but a man cannot be always reading and improving his mind. A pleasant state of things that would be, indeed, with everybody so preternaturally intelligent, that one could never hazard a stupid remark. Why, conversation would be at a stand-still, and society at an end. Besides there are hundreds of men in either of the services, which mainly go to form society in this country, who do read, and read to very good purpose. Many of them gain distinction by these means, in authorship or otherwise. And there are many more who have ample qualifications for doing so, and who remain mute inglorious Miltons, for want of a motive to be anything more. As far as society is concerned, however, they do good work. And considering the proportion of men of high talents and attainments scattered about the country, and who are at least equal in number to the "country bottled" class of the old school, it seems rather hard that the popular impression of the "tone" of society, has not been taken from the one class rather than the other. It is certainly a matter of right that the society should be judged by the majority of its

members, who though not exactly belonging to either of these classes, are yet just as clever and cultivated as the same rank of persons at home.

It is certain indeed that a great change has taken place in India of late years, in nearly everything. That the change has been for the better, who will deny? The advancement has been mainly caused by facilities of communication with home. It is being extended by facilities of communication with different parts of this country. The electric telegraph was a great step. But with all our respect for the "diffusion of ideas," we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that people do *not* communicate ideas by electric telegraph, never did, and never will do. They do not even communicate information, unless it concerns themselves, or unless they happen to be newspaper correspondents. No: they send messages to tailors to send them up coats, and they send messages to merchants to send them up beer. They send messages to tell their friends of births or deaths in which they are concerned, and messages of all kinds bearing upon their personal affairs. But this is scarcely the "diffusion of ideas" which is here talked about. That object is performed infinitely better by the post office, unless the ideas happen to be accompanied by money, (which it must be confessed they seldom are,) in which case they are apt to be stopped in their circulation, and that which was "meant for mankind" given up to a subordinate official. The great diffusion of ideas will be accomplished through a strictly material agency. The railway will be the great regenerator of India—of the provinces of course more than the presidencies. What man will appreciate the privilege of telegraphing to his tailor, when he and his tailor can so soon be made to meet? What man will concentrate his gratitude upon

the electric fluid for signifying that he is thirsty, when his beer can be brought to the bosom of his family, as with the stroke of some enchanter's wand? The diffusion of *men* will include the diffusion of ideas, and is the only real way of diffusing them. Of course when we say men we mean women—not as a difference but as an addition, and this brings us to a subject upon which we have ventured to touch but slightly hitherto.

Some of the critics of Indian society have been very severe upon the female portion of it. One says that they swear, another that they drink rum. We are not quite sure that these are the precise charges brought against them, but we have certainly read something equivalent in Mrs. Colin Mackenzie's book. Need we enter into a defence of our countrywomen in India, who do not differ from our countrywomen at home in any respect, but in finding themselves in a warm climate, and in endeavouring to accommodate themselves to it in as amiable a manner as possible? We know that there have been military ladies, who would call themselves by their husbands' titles when they have an opportunity for describing themselves officially, in *dâk* bungalow books, and such places. We know that there have been civil service ladies, who took upon themselves the dignity of their husband's offices, and talked most alarming shop. But these monstrosities must have been pensioned off some time ago, for it is certain that we do not meet with them now. These remnants of a barbarous age have passed by, and in place of them, we have ladies with the last French bonnets, the last English ideas, and who actually marry for love, occasionally, in the European style. It is true that there is still a notion existing in England that gentlemen in India send home for wives, and have strangers brought out to them, whom

they marry with great docility, and live with, until the wives run away from them, that is to say for three months or so. But what does it matter if people in England choose to believe in nonsense of the kind? It amuses them, and it does no harm to the subjects of their oriental imaginings. All observant people in this country cannot but see that there never was such a country for happy marriages, a country where the life of the husband and the life of the wife are so bound up together, and that this is peculiarly the case in the north-west. Marriages are made up suddenly, to be sure, in India; but, considering how well they usually turn out, the fact is all the more in favour of the state of society which admits of such precipitation. It is amusing enough to hear of the marriage, in the Mofussil, of people who have been acquainted for a month or two; of the singularly little ceremony attendant upon the event; and of the lady going home to the husband's house, whilom his bachelor's den, instead of the couple scampering about for a month as if they were ashamed of themselves, according to the modest English custom. But we ask any fastidious person who may object to the proceeding, what he would have substituted in its place? If the lover waits until he knows the lady more, somebody else, who knows her less, will probably snatch her up, and he will not be much the gainer by his delicacy. And as for going on a wedding tour, we would simply ask the fastidious person to get the bridegroom leave to go in the first place—to find him a place worth going to in the second place, and to pay the expenses of the journey in the third place. For ourselves, we are quite contented in the assurance that marriages in India—made in all the strange ways that they are—do somehow succeed: and after that fact, we have the utmost con-

tempt for anybody's opinion upon the point. Railways somehow led us to the subject of marriages. They will of course be immense promoters of that institution; and in their influence in this respect alone, we shall be able to find a cure for the only real disadvantage (after the climate) to which residents in the north-west are liable. When railways are in full operation, there will be no excuse for even the most susceptible of men making *mésalliances*—which some few of them (very few it must be admitted) are apt to do at present. Every man will be able to go to the presidencies and choose from the latest arrivals—if they will have him; and so keep up the “tone” of society, and the purely European character of the race. Indeed the improved means of transit will have such an effect in bringing strangers into the provinces, that journeys into the presidencies will be seldom required for such a purpose. And who shall describe the general effects of this influx of strangers into the provinces? We are not discussing politics at present, and shall refrain from describing the effects ourselves. But we do not hesitate, at the same time, to declare our belief, that those effects will be of a character, for a description of which “tremendous” is a mild term, and “highly beneficial” an insulting form of coldness.

### III.

#### THE SANTALS.

LOCATED, as I am, in the heart of our Indian empire, at a station guarded by several regiments of Queen's and Company's troops, it seems strange to hear of people around me becoming anxious on account of their too close proximity with a peaceful and primitive people, who are only about five hundred miles off. Yet it is true, that the Santals, or Sontals, or Santhals, or Sonthals (nobody agrees in orthography of Indian names), who are now (1854) ravaging a large district in Bengal and thereabouts, are described as a peaceful and primitive people; and it cannot be denied that they have a number of savage virtues which should render them the most formidable friends, and which certainly make them extremely inconvenient foes. These peaceful and primitive people have lately been moving about in large masses, numbering from three thousand to eight thousand each, to destroy, or loot, occasional villages, indigo factories, private houses, anything that came first to hand; murder defenceless travellers; and carry off everything of value that they had reason to suppose was honestly obtained. Among the exploits of this peaceful and primitive people, may be noted, as a model to mere



civilization, the slaughter of two European ladies, whose hands and feet they cut off; and the killing of an European baby, some of whose blood they compelled its mother to drink—they themselves partaking of the refreshment in a friendly manner.

It is true that, up to the present time, the Santals have kept their peaceful and primitive peculiarities to themselves; and travellers for many years have been in the habit of passing through their neighbourhood without molestation—even English ladies alone, or accompanied only by a native Ayah. In the very rare cases where such travellers have been molested, the Santals have not been the aggressors, and the murder or robbery has been merely an act of individual speculation, and has had no political import whatever. Indeed, so secure has European life and property seemed to be, even in the wildest parts of India, that an admiring Frenchman is recorded to have exclaimed, with an irreverence only pardonable for its Gallic and graphic force, that the government was “*comme le bon Dieu; on ne le voyait pas, mais il était partout*” (like the good Creator; one never saw it, but it was everywhere). It is therefore supposed that some provocation must have been offered by somebody, to cause the present departure from all precedent and primitiveness. It has been alleged that the people employed on the railway, with whom the Santals had pecuniary dealings, paid too much attention to the ladies of the tribe, and too little money to their husbands. Next, it is the exactions of the collectors of revenue to which the outbreak is attributed. Presently, we find that some holy places have been violated, and that the effigy of some sable goddess has been treated as if she were an improper character; then, it is made manifest that the whole proceedings are the result of

a blind belief that the Santal deities have decreed the end of the British rule, and mysterious accounts are sent forth of the Santal chief who is to effect the object—who is said to be of divine origin, and to have been born and to have arrived at manhood in a single night, just like the mango trees which the magicians at Madras raise with such marvellous rapidity for the delectation of overland griffs.

The whole affair is mysterious; and while waiting to see how it will end, the reader might do worse than learn, what few persons in India really know, who the Santals are, and how far they are the peaceful and primitive people, which they have clearly shown themselves not to be.

An interesting account of the Santals is to be found in the "Asiatic Researches," volume four of the quarto edition, reprinted in London in 1799; and the latest description we have seen is by the Rev. J. Phillips, an industrious missionary, published in the "Oriental Baptist," in July, 1854. Both of these accounts furnish us with what may be relied upon as authentic information; and the extent to which they agree with one another shows that the Santals, though revolutionary as regards British rule, are a strictly conservative people among themselves. They are said to have entered Orissa from the north—at what period is unknown—and to have dispersed themselves through the tributary mehals lying west of Balasore, Jellassore, Midnapore, Baukura, Suri, and Râj-mahal; thence westward, through Bhau-gulpore and Monghyr, in Behar—the whole including a territory of some four hundred miles in extent. They seem to be of one race, and it is certain that they speak one language. In Orissa they are described as a hardy and industrious people; generally short, stout, robust, of

broad features, with very dark complexion, and hair somewhat curly. Those who had held intercourse with them found them to be mild and placable, and of a particularly social turn. They are more dignified and proud than the Hindus, whom we now find them massacring without mercy, and are at the same time more hospitable and courteous to strangers. Women, too, exercise considerable influence over their manners and habits, and in this respect they afford a striking contrast to most other Indian nations. Santal wives are of course not allowed to eat with their husbands; but they may order the dinner, and take a considerable interest in domestic arrangements; and their freedom and frankness to strangers is so agreeable, that it would be held in horror in polite Hindu or Mahomedan society. It is probably this characteristic which has caused the railway people, who are generally wifeless to a hopeless extent, to be guilty of the domestic depredations alluded to. Polygamy, it seems, is allowed, but is little practised, except when the younger brother takes the widow of the elder, to whom, according to law, he has a right. The Santals are generally believed to be aborigines of the country; but there can be no doubt that they are a distinct race from the Hindus, with whom they have little in common. Their religion has small resemblance to that of the Hindu; their castes are not so binding, and a Santal may lose his caste altogether without incurring much disgrace, as far as the men are concerned. Then they are great drunkards, which the Hindus never are; for—with the exception of the pariahs or outcasts, who are employed only in the most menial offices—the Hindu, however ignorant and brutal, will very rarely deviate from the rule of total abstinence, which your Mussalman very often regards no more than

the majority of Christians keep the commandments of their own church.

According to the Santal traditions, the first man and woman came from ducks' eggs, and were married in due form under the auspices of Sita, or Marang Buru, one of their gods ; who it is conjectured may be indetical with the Siva of the Hindus. Such points as the original nakedness of our first parents, and the dispersion of mankind, with some allusions to a deluge, show traces of Mosaic history. The Santals are also divided into tribes, something like the Israelites, but they all live together upon terms of perfect equality ; and the only restriction seems to be, that a man must not marry in his own tribe, but must go elsewhere—a wise provision, having, no doubt, for its object, the prevention of alliances with near kindred.

The love of strong drink, which I have noticed, is a part of their religion. Their god, they say, was under its influence when he brought together the original Santals from the ducks' eggs ; and its use is declared to be enjoined by divine authority. The spirit seems to be of only one kind ; it is called Handia, and is a fermented preparation of rice. It is not intoxicating taken in small quantities, but that objection is provided for by taking it in large quantities—a gallon or two at a time—and they will sit over it half the day, or all the day. At all religious, and other solemn ceremonies, it is a *sine quâ non*. But the Santals are not prejudiced, and will drink the strong waters of the Giaur whenever they can beg, borrow, or steal them ; but they generally find them too high in price to pay for, and debt is an institution which civilization has not yet introduced among them.

From intoxication to religion is but one step, according to the Santals. Their creed is described by Mr. Phillips

as a strange mixture of Hindu superstition, demon-worship, and a belief in, and dread of, demons, ghosts, and hobgoblins, Hinduism is making some inroads into it, as is proved by the introduction of the Charak-puja, or swinging festival, which has been among the phenomena of late years : backs scarred by iron hooks are now frequently to be seen among this primitive people. For the rest, the sun is said to be their supreme god ; but they have smaller gods, whose light is less dazzling, and who are invoked with offerings of meat, rice, and similar refreshments. A sanguinary Hindu goddess, it is alleged, is also worshipped by the Santals in some localities. To her, human sacrifices are made ; and it is possible that the mutilation of the two European ladies, already alluded to, had for its object the propitiation of this deity. The Santals swear by the skin of the tiger, or by a tiger's head, sketched on a mango leaf ; and they believe that a false oath will be punished by the living animal. They also swear by their gods and by the heads of their children.

The Santals are agricultural in their pursuits, and would be prosperous, but for the exactions of their petty Hindu rulers. They are industrious at their work, unlike the Hindus, and set about it in a blithe and cheerful spirit, which the Hindus never do. They are indeed generally a cheerful people ; fond of music and dancing, and less elegant recreations, in which the civilised amusement of cock-fighting has a share. Here, again, the Santals are distinguished from other eastern nations. Dancers, among both Hindus and Mahomedans, are always hired, and are generally infamous in other respects. But the Santals cultivate dancing themselves, for the fun of the thing ; and their jattras, when the young men are clad in plumes taken from every description of bird, and the

girls (respectable females) have their heads uncovered, are described by those who have witnessed them to be highly exhilarating and impressive.

The account of the Santals in the *Asiatic Researches*, (1799,) describes both men and women as remarkably bashful, but more recent writers give to them the good qualities of truth and cheerfulness. There seems also to be a sentiment of honour among them; for it is said that they use poisoned arrows in hunting, but never against their foes. If this be the case—and we hear nothing of poisoned arrows in the recent conflicts—they are infinitely more respectable than our civilised enemy, the Russians, who would most likely consider such forbearance as foolish, and declare that it is not war.

So much for the virtues of these people. These qualities are interesting as matters of speculation; but most persons in India think they have received too much consideration from the government, since a more savage and ferocious enemy than the Santal our arms have seldom had to contend with. Entrenched in their jungles, they are nearly impregnable; and from their jungles they never emerge, except to take us at a disadvantage. The sepoy regiments are not always trustworthy;\* and nobody doubts that the Bhaugulpore Rangers, the other day behaved disgracefully. But not only did we have bad troops on the spot, but through hundreds of miles of wild country we had no troops at all. There is no station on the grand trunk roads between Burdwan and Benares; and travellers passing through that desolate and beautiful tract never fail to be struck with the facility with which they might be robbed and murdered. To crown all, notwithstanding the loss

\* I need scarcely remark that this was written before 1857.

of life and property which has taken place, the insult to our power, and the injury to our prestige, martial law has not been proclaimed, and even those troops which are on the spot cannot act without the civil authority. The consequence has been a state of alarm throughout the empire, which is most dreaded by those who have the best experience of the peculiarities of the European position, and the character of the native population.

## IV.

### THE ROAD IN INDIA.

DASHING up to the station in a hansom, and finding oneself safe in a first-class railway carriage, after a brief mandate to a porter and a policeman on the subject of luggage, and receiving some change and a piece of card through a limited pigeon-hole, are very different transactions to those imposed on a traveller before he starts on a journey in India. In the first place, he must inquire whether he can go at all; and the affirmative being ascertained, he must make comprehensive arrangements to be as comfortable as possible. I, who have made several journeys from Calcutta to the upper provinces, without counting occasional jaunts of two or three hundred miles in deviating directions, have learned that art of taking care of oneself, which is the first thing to be learnt in India, and am competent to be of some use to society by imparting it.

The commencement of the process is this. After becoming quite tired of Calcutta,—which happens in a very little time,—you inquire at one of the two principal dâk companies, when you can manage to get away. This depends upon the number of candidates, and their



proportion to the number of carriages and horses along the road. It is Monday, let us say, and you find that on Tuesday Ensign Griff and Lieutenant Green are going up a long way to join their respective regiments, (which the Ensign has not yet joined at all,) at some place the name of which probably ends in "bad." On the next day, a judge, who has just returned from England, where he has spent two years in abusing the climate, is also to go up the country, with the determination to abuse *its* climate still more. On the day following, seven young ladies, who have come out by the last mail to be married, are all travelling in the same direction, under the care of seven ayahs, (female natives of the lady's-maid persuasion,) and have of course engrossed all the available horses on the route. On Thursday, accommodation is graciously vouchsafed, and the payment of one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty rupees, if one is going about as far as Agra, (some eight hundred miles,) settles the rest. Of course we—I am not writing like an editor, but really mean that I am not alone—of course we do not start until night—nobody does; and of course we make the starting as pleasant as possible. We are dining out, probably, the same evening, and the people of the house do their best to make us comfortable. Have we everything that we want? Are we warm enough? Oh, yes. We have a hamper, packed under the licence of a very general order by Spence's people, (Spence's is the great hotel.) It is supposed to contain sherry and beer; pale ale, of course; a little brandy; potted meats, such as those which are so pleasantly described in the *Lancet*; a tin case of biscuits, another of tea, another of sugar, and perhaps some concentrated soup. We have plates, and knives and forks; for in these respects it is far

better not to trust to the chances of the road. As for warmth, there is the *resai*, a padded counterpane, with an exterior of soft crimson silk. Still we must have something, and we contrive to accommodate the people of the house by accepting a corkscrew—which we have forgotten, owing to our reminiscences of English pic-nics—and a tumbler or two, which have been also omitted in the arrangements.

The carriage is a square contrivance, painted green or brown outside, according to the prejudices of the respective companies. It is on four wheels, and evinces other symptoms of sanity, though in the article of springs I must say it is singularly deficient. Inside it is probably lined, or probably not lined,—it is certainly not padded. It has two seats, and the space between the two is usually occupied by luggage, the top being covered by a cushion; so that the traveller extends himself with his feet up during the entire journey, and has just room to lie at full length if he feels so disposed. The well, as we should call it in respect to an Irish car, is usually devoted to the provisions; and the top of the *gharree*, (this is the local name for a carriage,) is piled with trunks, or as many of them as one is not obliged to send by another conveyance,—by a stray servant or two, it may be, and by the coachman. But the loading of the outside is not half so important a matter as the fitting up of the inside. On each portion of the walls of the *gharree* not occupied by the windows, there are pockets, where those articles are stowed which are in most constant requisition. Some soda-water is a very desirable article, as the water on the road, especially if brought at night, may not be clean; and even if it be clean, one prefers not to take it from a brass *chillumchee*, which is usually devoted to lavatory purposes. Some

brandy or sherry is also a desirable thing to place in one of the pockets, and the corkscrew should always be deposited in one of the near ones, although the point is apt to cut through its covering, and run into your shoulder. In the corresponding pocket to that of the corkscrew, I would recommend that you place your Colt's revolver, a precaution which Indian travellers are not apt to neglect. Since the Santal rebellion, I fancy that few will be so unwise as to do so, or since the mutinies no man so mad. The biscuits should also be in an accessible place; and if you are travelling alone, or with a companion of your own sex, you must have a five hundred box of Manillas (I recommend number two) placed at your feet, in that little economical space which is saved under the seat of the driver; but you need not kick this about too much in your sleep. If you are travelling up with the object of your matrimonial affections, I see no reason—unless she does—why you should not have the same box, because there are many opportunities when you may make it mutually agreeable for you to sit up with the coachman, and improve your mind and Hindostanee by converse with that not always uninteresting individual.

But all this time we are forgetting to start. The coachman is quite accustomed to wait hour after hour for his passengers: and, if they chose to delay, would, I feel assured, wait at least a fortnight, occasionally smoking his hookah, and once a-day asking to go off to his khana, (dinner,) without manifesting any symptom of impatience. But the period having arrived, and the horse—to whom your delay has been so much distinct gain—having been put in, there is no longer any excuse, in anybody's case, for not starting. The real difficulty of starting now, in all probability, commences, though

the first horse is generally a very favourable specimen of those you are likely to get on the road.

The horse generally commences his performances in the following manner. First, he won't go,—and the uninitiated traveller begins to think that the authorities have made a mistake, and that the wrong horse has been put into the wrong place. A simple inquiry, however, dissipates this delusion; and it is found that not to go at first is the regular thing. The traveller accordingly sinks back upon the pillows which he has carefully stowed under his shoulders, and surrenders himself to our old friend “circumstances over which he has no control.” The principal circumstance in question—that is, the horse—having declared that he won't go in the beginning, is not disposed to change his mind in a hurry. He backs inevitably, rears probably, snorts contingently, and evinces other symptoms of having a will of his own, and not being disposed to add a codicil to it. The driver, who is now fairly launched into the demands of the crisis, twitches at the reins in as uncoachmanlike a style as is demanded by the very unprofessional conduct of the animal,—slashing away with a leather-thonged whip, and accompanying its conduct with vocal remonstrances. He is reinforced by a dozen natives, who seize the wheels, two or three of them at each, while others push on from behind, with a chorus of guttural exclamations, intended partly as a private gratification, partly as an encouragement to the circumstance. He owns no medium. When he does move, he moves with a vengeance. He commences a mad gallop, which swings the gharree from side to side, the traveller's apprehensions being drowned by the notes of a demoniacal post-horn, which the driver considers it his duty to sound upon all great occasions. A mile is soon traversed

in this manner, and then the "circumstance" shows itself amenable to human control, and gets into his ordinary pace, which, after this, is not too quick to be alarming.

And now comes on the dead night, and the desolation of the journey. We look intently at nothing for a little time through the windows, listening to the rattle of the vehicle which becomes familiar to our ears. Then we make a start on a sudden, and find we have been to sleep. It is the stopping of the vehicle which wakes us. We have done the first stage—only six miles—and have arrived at a "chokee" station. Here is a miserable little hut, and a conglomeration of partitions formed of mud, in which the horses are stalled, destitute of roofs, and apparently of beds. It is a hideous place, like a huge dunghill, with little mouldering fires here and there, from one of which a chance stranger—native and naked—gets you, after a great deal of fruitless poking about, a light for the cheroot which you are sure to want by this time. As the horse which has brought you over the stage is being led up and down to cool, you think that you never saw a more wretched-looking little beast; but you change your mind on seeing the animal which is to draw you on. He is a little worse, though it is evident from the way in which he kicks at the shafts while being harnessed, that he has some strength and go in him. He is in all probability young, and his chief defects arise from being almost unbroken when first called upon to make a figure in the world. It is very likely that the starting will be attended by as great difficulties as before; but of course this does not uniformly happen; some of the horses vary the proceeding by starting well, and so beguiling the traveller into a false confidence, which is dissipated when he finds himself lying in a ditch at the side of the road

the gharree smashed, and the horse lying motionless among the broken shafts. This happened to the present narrator during a very early period in his travelling experience, and the same misadventure occurs to most persons who trust themselves often on the road. There is only one course to take; to set the gharree upon its legs as well as you can, and be drawn in by bearers to the nearest station, where, if everybody is as fortunate as myself, they will be able to borrow another vehicle from the dâk company's agent. It is a very inglorious mode of transit—being drawn in by a dozen men, any number of whom are always to be found in India to do the work of horses—all howling a monotonous chant.

After these incidents of travel, you become callous, and make yourself as comfortable as may be, with the aid of a book, and those other resources for which you have made the gharree eminent among its kind. Reading, however, can of course be indulged in only by day. During the night there is nothing for it, but to wrap yourself in your resai, and sleep if you can. This is, if you do not feel inclined to stay at a dâk bungalow, which one is very apt to spurn at first setting forth, and take advantage of afterwards in a mean-spirited manner. The great trial of sleeping in the gharree is in the very early morning, from two or three until four or five o'clock, when for a great part of the year it is piercing cold—a cold which makes the cheroot doubly dear, and anything else detestable. There is no doubt that it is trying, and you determine to stand it no longer. You will stop and breakfast. You have tried brandy-and-water, and it is of no use; some hot tea will be just the thing. You accordingly push your legs out of the gharree, getting duly rasped by the wheel in the process, and call out to the driver to know how far off the

next dâk bungalow is. The answer is very satisfactory. The nearest is two miles behind you ; you have passed it in your sleep. What is to be done ? To turn back would be childish, but the next bungalow is fourteen miles further on. Still it would be childish to turn back ; so you go on. In about three hours the coachman blows on his post-horn the announcement that you have arrived at a bungalow. It is carefully closed up at all points, and presents the appearance of the family being absent on a foreign tour. The jalousies, which reach to the ground are elaborately dusty, and make no sign. The house has apparently not been entered for ages, and, as far as the last fortnight is concerned, this is no doubt strictly true. There is no sign of life in the vicinity, but this it is, of course, the business of the traveller to create. He accordingly calls out " Qui hai ?"—an equivalent for " Who's there ?" Presently a man with a large beard emerges from some inscrutable out-building, who calls somebody else to his assistance, and then makes his obeisance to the traveller. The somebody else, who does not seem to like it, somehow gets into the house, and opens the principal doors, and the traveller is made free of the desolate dwelling.

The momentous question comes next. What can he have for breakfast ? The man with the beard, who is the khausamah, or major-domo, goes through the usual formulæ of people of his kind—talks of mutton chops, of iron-y-stew (by which Irish stew is understood), and of curry, but eventually strongly recommends the only dishes to be had, grilled morgee, or fowl, and unda, or eggs, boiled or roasted at pleasure. The traveller yields to these delicacies, and agrees to spend the time employed in their preparation, at his toilette. Fortunately, there is always a bathing-room adjoining, and plenty of

cold water; for the rest, the traveller's own resources are sufficient. In the intervals of dressing he strays out into the verandah, and has a pleasing view of the khansamah, who has been for some twenty minutes occupied in chasing the promised breakfast round the house. It is an old bird, and is not to be caught by the kind of chaff which is proffered; but, in the end, his head is chopped off, after the Mahomedan fashion, with sufficient want of resignation to acquit him of any charge of hypocrisy in meeting his death. This spectacle is not cheering, and the traveller, being by this time dressed, a change to the interior has its advantages. The room is of moderate size, and is not beset with too much furniture. Besides three chairs, there are two beds—without curtains and without bedding; each traveller being supposed to bring his own. To these are added a table, and on the mantle-piece a compact little bookcase, the books carefully locked in, and a printed list of them pasted outside. The notice heading the list informs us, that they are deposited by a Tract Society for the benefit of travellers. We of course overhaul them. There is a History of Rome, written from a serious point of view; a History of Greece, written from a serious point of view; a Life of Alfred the Great, written from a serious point of view (with a parable made somehow out of the cake story); and a Life of Dr. Dodd, written from a particularly serious point of view, the moral being that it is a great pity that such pious persons as he should come to be hanged.

On the wall he finds suspended a notice informing him that travellers occupying the bungalow for less than three hours, will be charged eight annas, or one shilling; for more than that time, and less than twenty-four hours, one rupee; that travellers must not stay too long, to the



inconvenience of later arrivals, and that they must complain of any deficiencies to the postmaster of the district. Under the last announcement will be generally found a comic style of note in pencil, such as "You don't say so!" or, "What's the use of that?" and other satirical manifestations. Occasionally, one sees something a little more eloquent scrawled upon the walls. In a bungalow near Shergotty, I saw a few years since a drawing of a rural cottage, with a garden, and a stream running through it, on the bank of which a gentleman was represented landing a trout nearly as big as himself, in that triumphant manner so peculiar to sporting pictures. Underneath was written the name of some place in Perthshire, and some lines of Bryant's description of the pleasures of home and a country life. Some homesick traveller had written this while lying on the bed during an afternoon reverie. Poor fellow! he told his tale plainly enough; and a very common tale it is in India.

"Yes, it comes at last!" Not so bad, after all. The fowl is certainly more resigned to his fate than he was half-an-hour ago; and the eggs have the merit of being still in the freshness of their youth. The tea is not so good as in England; but we are too near China to expect that; besides, it is made with luke-warm water, after the favourite fashion of Indian servants. The sugar, too, looks as if it had been brought promiscuously from the desert; but this, again, is an article of local produce, and is, therefore, sure to be bad. There is no bread, too; but the native chuppathe, though not good, nevertheless can be eaten. The absence of butter is not a very severe infliction, considering that the cook will very likely bring some red-currant jelly in a little bottle that has formerly contained pomade for the hair.

The meal over, and the traveller in that well-known

condition which would permit a child to play with him, he prepares to start ; but there is an important ceremony to be performed. He must enter his name, starting-place, destination, and the hour of his arrival and departure, in the travellers' book, in which he may make remarks upon the subject of his accomodation. As these books contain many records of the kind, they are perhaps the most amusing species of literature procurable in the Dâk bungalows, and are eagerly gloated over by travellers on the look out for any names that they may know. Here the different characteristics of the Indian community freely develope themselves. Some of the entries are formal ; many facetious ; some flippant ; others severe. The following is a fair specimen of the entries :—

Mr. Jos. Sedley, C.I., and family, from Calcutta to Bogglewallah. Stayed two hours. Breakfast good. Khitmatgar attentive. Paid two rupees.

That is the formal style. The facetious is something like the following :—

Lieutenant Bolt and Ensign Scamper (funny fellows generally give wrong names), on sick-leave for pig-sticking. Came last night. Going presently. Paid two rupees. Breakfast beastly. No beer. Had to kick the Khitmatgar for not understanding English. Why doesn't the fellow get his hair cut ?

This sort of entry is illustrated occasionally by a sketch of the traveller being sick, as a sarcasm upon the refreshment ; or the portrait of the commanding officer of the travellers' regiment (if he be unpopular) hanging on a gallows, and smoking a short pipe.

This is succeeded, probably, by something like the following :—

Mrs. Major-General Muggins, C.B., and five daughters. Arrived at

three in the afternoon, and stayed to tea. Bungalow very clean. Everything very nice. Servants attentive.

Underneath an announcement of the kind, we saw written by a mad wag :—

All rot. Everything disgusting. And only two chairs in the place. Where did four of the Miss Mugginses perch themselves ?

Of course the crusty British traveller, who complains of everything, comes out strong upon these occasions :—

Curry detestable. Khausamah filthy. No cream. Harvey's sauce not to be had. Disgraceful to the authorities.

The servant always receives back the book with a humble salaam, and, as he cannot read English, tries to discover by the look of the traveller whether something to his advantage, or the reverse, has been recorded. He generally looks mystified at the illustrations, and I believe, considers them as signs of the traveller belonging to some secret society, or exclusive caste.

Once more on his road, there is very little to remark of the other incidents likely to befall a traveller during an ordinary journey. All Dâk bungalows are the same, and so are all the chokee stations where they change horses. At the latter, a European is still an object of special curiosity, to judge by the way in which men and children—the latter very pot-bellied, and without any clothing—stare in at the windows ; without counting the cripples and idiots, of whom there are generally two or three, who hop about and whine for pice. They are disgusting exhibitions, and may be , advantageously bought off.

But of late years, a new feature has introduced itself into travelling in the north-western provinces ; turnpikes—an innovation which has excited the greatest disgust.

Very different are these from the jovial pike of the British highway. There is a bar stretching across the road, and a big bungalow on one side. Here the toll-keeper may be generally seen seated at a table in the verandah, with his books, and all the official et ceteras about him. Sometimes he is a native ; but if a European, he is sure to have a very large family, as the holders of all small appointments in India have. His is, perhaps, the only house for miles and miles round, and a lonely life it must be for him. In England, turnpike men are said to be misanthropical ; in India, they are sad, by way of distinction, and generally wish you good morning, or good evening, with a resigned air, and always look as if they wished they were going on with you. In the mean time, the traveller proceeds on his way, considering himself very hardly used because he is made to pay a shilling, and must pass another night or two on the road, before he can be once more among his friends.

Let me hope that in a few years longer, the extension of railroads in India will render this description a curiosity ; and that the dâk will be among the things that were.

## V.

### INDIA AND COTTON.

A CRY for cotton has been heard in the north, where millions of our countrymen depend upon that article for their daily bread. How to satisfy the cry—how to supply the bread—has been a question eagerly discussed. Cotton, to be sure, may be obtained in nearly every part of the world. In the east, in the west, in the south, the capabilities for its growth are immense ; but what is wanted is a source of certain and sustained supply. In America our chances are uncertain, as recent events have proved. Of all other countries, India is generally admitted to afford the finest as well as the readiest field for the employment of that vast amount of capital which must soon remain idle unless an outlet be found for it. The “Cotton Supply Association,” in its report published last year, declared decisively in favour of India, as having advantages beyond all its competitors in this respect ; it remains, therefore, only to make good use of them in order to be independent of America for ever.

It is at this point that our difficulties begin. Nature has given us every advantage in India that soil and climate can furnish ; but although she has done so much for us, we have done so little for ourselves that the work

may be considered barely commenced, There are immense cotton-fields, it is true ; but neither capital, skill, enterprise, nor even honesty, are employed in raising the plant ; which is, therefore, an inferior article, fetching an inferior price. The natives, to whom the cultivation is almost entirely confined, have very little power to improve the state of things, and what power they have they do not care to employ. Each man has a little patch of ground which he cultivates for himself. He is responsible to no other person for looking after his own interests, except, indeed, to the native usurer, from whom he has received advances for the purchase of seed, and who faithfully sells him up if he neglects to pay them back. The first mistake which he makes is in the matter of this same seed. The seed produced from his own district is sown over and over again, year after year, and has been allowed to reproduce itself in this manner for centuries past. The usual fate of a very old family which has been too exclusive in its alliances, of course attends it. The plant becomes weak and imbecile, and, coming from an exhausted stock, suffers the additional disadvantage of having its education entirely neglected. It never could be an aristocrat, and the ryot (or cultivator) effectually prevents it from taking even a respectable middle-class rank. The seed having been sown, the ryot is happy for a time in throwing the responsibility upon nature, under whose auspices it usually grows up in due time. The period for gathering depends less upon the ripeness of the cotton than the private convenience of the ryot—a marriage or death in his family, or the occurrence of some native festival—so that the process is usually performed either too soon or too late. The other preparations which it has to undergo are made upon the same lax principle ; and the delay

of transport being added to the other delays, the cotton most likely catches the rainy season on its way to the coast, where it arrives damaged if not utterly spoiled. The purchaser, indeed, may consider himself fortunate if he receives the article only dirty and ill prepared ; for I have heard of such things as straw being packed by mistake in the bales, not to mention the carcasses of animals, and other little matters of the kind.

A European undertaking the cultivation of cotton, would, it may be easily believed, set to work in a different manner. In the first place, he would make arrangements to receive regular supplies of seed from a distance, so as to give vigour to the produce, the education of which would receive his unremitting attention. When the plant became ripe, he would take care that it was gathered at once. If a marriage or a death took place in his family at the critical period, he would be very glad in the one case, and very sorry in the other, as in duty bound ; but neither occasion would he make an excuse for the neglect of business ; and as for *his* national holidays, they are so few that their observance would not be likely to interfere with his interests. The consequence would be the production of the best article that could be produced, commanding the highest price in the market ; and land being plentiful and labour cheap, all Lancashire could, under Anglo-Saxon superintendence, be supplied, over and over again, from India alone. The European grower would not be merely gratifying his own selfish interests, but would be effecting incalculable good to the people among whom he lived. Of course he would employ natives, and these natives, in the districts where cotton is now cultivated, would be the same natives who now employ themselves. The difference to them would be, that, instead of living

in a state of independent semi-starvation, with nobody to take the smallest interest in their woes, except the native usurer, they would be in the employment of a man of capital, who would most probably make them advances without interest, give them their seed (good seed, new to the land) at cost price, and pay them good wages, upon the sole condition that he got good work in return.

We all know that honesty is the best policy, even though we may not have "tried both," like the practical Scottish gentleman, and that where work is to be done, it is an especially admirable arrangement; it being easier, in the long run, to do one's duty than to neglect it. This fact, after a little experience, becomes as apparent to the ryot as to ourselves. But the experience must be forced upon him—he will never seek it for himself; and in order to force it upon him, European supervision is a matter of absolute necessity. It is continually seen, even in England, that a man who thoroughly understands the work to be performed, and who is determined that it shall be performed in the best manner, exercises an influence upon his subordinates which the most idle and wilful among them find it difficult to withstand. How much more potent, then, must be the influence of an energetic European upon men belonging to the lowest class of Asiatics, who, be their prejudices what they may, look up to him as a superior being, and in whom they cannot choose but place their trust! Europeans are too commonly accused of being actuated by "selfish interests" in pushing their fortunes in India—as if the majority of men had any other object in view in their way through the world; but it is impossible for them, be they as selfish as they will, to benefit themselves without benefiting those



around them. This is not a mere matter of opinion. It is a simple fact, which can be proved, that wherever Europeans are settled in India—engaged in merchandise, or manufacture, or what not—the natives in that neighbourhood are better fed, better clothed, and better instructed than in those parts where they are left to themselves, or rather to the tender mercies of money-lenders, rapacious landlords, and extortioners of all descriptions. It is true that these tyrants are “still, at least, their countrymen,” but even that recommendation, however admirable in sentiment, may be found insufficient when unaccompanied by any other.

It is plain, therefore, that to make India an efficient field for cotton cultivation, we must have European agency. To secure this, nothing would seem to be more easy. Lancashire has only to send out her money, and competent persons to employ it, and in a comparatively short time she may have at command any amount of the raw material by which they feed millions and make millionnaires of so many, in that great hive of industry. But this is exactly what Lancashire will not do. Her capitalists say, “We will not trust our money in India, where we have no security for our property. We cannot forget the fate of the indigo interest; and what has happened to indigo, may happen to cotton at any time.” The question then arises, what *has* happened to the indigo interest? An intelligent public, which reads the newspapers, has probably a general idea that the interest has been ruined; but the accounts of the process which have appeared in the local papers, not having been extensively reproduced in this country, and such accounts as have been copied being very little read, and blue-books and official documents generally being voted bores (especially when they relate to India), it may not

be unprofitable to give an outline of the circumstances of the case. It is a long story, but it may be made a short one, and I promise that the nutshell in which I will place it shall not be that of a cocoa-nut.

The facts, then, are briefly these :—The indigo season of 1859, in Bengal, was an unprosperous one. Prices had been rising for the previous three or four years, and at that time seemed permanently settled upon a higher scale, rice in particular being at a greater price than had been known for a long period. The indigo crop, moreover, was partially destroyed by a gale at the end of July, just when it was ripe. There was some distress felt among the ryots (cultivators), which the planters were naturally desirous to relieve; but as very few of them had made any profits during the year, this could be only partially effected. Some planters paid higher rates for coolies (unskilled labourers), carts, &c., and one of them even doubled the usual remuneration of this class, and granted to the ryots a partial remission of their engagements. (It may be here mentioned, that there are two ways of raising indigo: one by *neez*, or private cultivation; the other by the *ryotwaree* system, that is to say, by contracts made with the ryots to grow the plant, they receiving advances of money from the planters, from whom they purchase their seed at cost price, and selling the produce back to the planters at a certain fixed rate per bundle. This latter is the system most prevalent in Bengal.) The distress would have passed away, as distress had passed away before, but for the appointment of a gentleman to the government of Bengal, who, almost as soon as his accession to office, manifested a hostile feeling towards the planters—a class never very popular with the local government, but who had met with toleration in consideration of the good

that they effected—the importance of which may be estimated from the fact that the annual outlay upon the indigo concerns in Bengal alone is about two millions sterling, the entire of which sum is spent in the indigo districts.

The lieutenant-governor, himself hostile to the planters, had a subordinate—a certain magistrate of Baraset—who but too well carried out his policy. There is a scandalous story of the cause of this latter gentleman's hostility which I will not repeat. Let it suffice to say that, taking advantage of an equivocally-worded minute made by the lieutenant-governor, he caused a proclamation to be issued in his district, giving the ryots to understand that they were not bound to perform the contracts which they had undertaken, and on account of which they had received large advances, unless it pleased them to do so, and suggesting to them the nature of the excuses which they might make for the repudiation of their engagements. In England, I fear, there is many a gentleman who would not trouble himself to pay his tailor's bill, if the law offered him the option of leaving it unpaid; and there are not many workmen who would, under similar circumstances, do an hour's work for money which they had received beforehand. It is therefore not very wonderful if the Indian ryots took advantage of the gracious permission of a paternal government, and transferred their labour to markets in which they were not already indebted. The consequence was, that a large proportion of the crops were spoiled last year, and the ryots, believing that it was the wish of the government to turn the planters out of the country, lent their assistance in every way towards this object. Riots became matters of everyday occurrence, and the whole of Lower Bengal was

soon in a state which it is scarcely exaggeration to call insurrection.

The late Mr. Wilson saw that strong measures were necessary, and passed a temporary act (to endure for six months) for the summary enforcement of contracts, the only redress hitherto afforded being by process in the notoriously corrupt civil courts, to recover the money advanced, the loss incurred through the breaking of the agreement not being taken into consideration, and the proceedings involved being about as complex as those of our Court of Chancery. Mr. Wilson's act produced an immediate effect. The ryots were surprised to find that the supreme government, at any rate, did not intend to ruin the planters, and a tolerable degree of quiet was restored, the crops, however, being beyond recovery. In the meantime, the "friends of the people"—missionaries and others—made the most outrageous charges against the planters of extortion and oppression, and in order to examine into these and all the circumstances attending the disturbances, a commission, known as the "Indigo Commission," was appointed. The members consisted of two members of the civil service, one missionary, one native baboo in the employment of the Bengal government, and one European merchant. There was a long and elaborate inquiry. Every scrap of evidence that could be produced against the planters was forthcoming, and if ever a case could be made out to their prejudice this was certainly the time. But the result of the investigation was, that not one of the charges was established, while nearly every one was utterly and entirely disproved. The fact is, these charges were all old ones—some of them going so far back as fifty years; they had all been refuted over and over again, and whatever amount of fact they might have been founded

upon, reflected upon a past generation of men, among whom the black sheep, it must be said, were not so rare as they are now.

But although the report of the commission necessarily exonerated the planters, the main recommendation which it contained was not in their favour. The commission, as we have seen, consisted of five members. Of the two members of the civil service, one was an avowed anti-planter and "Bengal clique" man, while the other, who had been reared in the good school of Sir John Lawrence, and who had been sent for by Mr. Wilson from the Punjab to act as financial secretary, was a man of large views and liberal tendencies, and above local prejudices. The Bengal civilian recommended that the act for the enforcement of indigo contracts should not be renewed, and in this he was supported by the missionary, inspired by a strong class hatred of the planter, which would effectually prevent him from taking any other course, and by the native baboo, who would be equally certain to vote whichever way 'the master' pleased. Thus, from the very constitution of the commission, the Bengal government had a necessary majority, the minority being composed of the Punjab civilian and the European merchant, who were in favour of the enforcement of contracts by a summary process. Accordingly, on the expiration of the act, no renewal took place, except of the insurrection, which became so violent that it was found necessary to send large bodies of police and military to the spot, where they have been obliged to remain ever since, the ryots in the meantime having gone so far as to resist the payment of rents.

The above are the main facts—not too many for a moderate nutshell, I hope—of this great controversy, which has been now some two years in agitation, and

which is by no means settled at the present moment. It should be remarked, however, that although the commission acquitted the planters of all the particular offences charged against them, the opposition upon general grounds remains as strong as ever. The system of advances, say the supporters of the Bengal government, is a vicious one, as it keeps the ryot at the mercy of the planter, and compels him to cultivate an unprofitable crop.

With regard to the first of these assertions, it is true enough that the system of advances is a bad one, because it makes the ryot lazy and improvident, and prevents him from having that heart in his work which he would have under a more healthy arrangement. But it is the custom of the country, which the planter did not invent, and to which he unwillingly yields. The system is common all over India, where you can scarcely get a native to make even a pair of boots without giving him an advance. It is one which the government themselves are compelled to adopt in the opium and salt manufactures—both of which are monopolies in India—though it must be said that the system in the case of the government does not lead to such disastrous results, as they take care to reserve to themselves the remedy which they deny to the indigo planters, and to enforce the fulfilment of *their* contracts by summary process. Moreover, the planters' advances, sometimes reinforced by additional loans, are made without any interest whatever, and however large the arrears may accrue, a case has never been known in which the planter has sued the ryot for their recovery. Yet these arrears extend over years of time and hundreds of rupees, which are so much money sunk as effectually as if cast into the Bay of Bengal. The native zemindars and usurers

on the other hand, when *they* make loans and advances, sell up the poor man without mercy ; his bullocks, and his extremely little all, are ruthlessly seized and disposed of, and he is fortunate if he finds himself able to “take up his bed and walk” to some more promising district—that light but necessary article of furniture being most frequently sent the way of the rest of his chattels, if he happen to have any others.

As for his being compelled to cultivate an unprofitable crop, the assertion is disproved by incontrovertible facts. One would fancy, if one accepted all the nonsense put forth upon the subject, that the ryot was obliged to starve by growing indigo, while he would have an ample fortune at his command by simply growing rice. But it happens that the land best adapted to indigo is least adapted to rice. More than one-half of the indigo crop in Lower Bengal is sown upon new alluvial-formed lands, or churs, on the banks of large rivers or the beds of old rivers, which are unfit for rice or any other crop. Moreover, indigo is a fertilising and not an exhausting crop. The rich, strong black loam, in fact, is the best land for rice, and nine-tenths of this is bheel land, which is land on which indigo is never sown. The planter aims at having a proportion of different descriptions of soil, so that under any varieties of weather he may have the chance of a good crop on the average. The only land upon which indigo and rice will grow in common is high land, and it is notorious that what they call the *aous* rice, which is grown upon this, is a failure. Indigo is doubtless a precarious crop, but so are all crops in a tropical country subject to inundations, and none more so than rice. Taking every circumstance into consideration, it has been shown that the same piece of land would produce either *aous* rice

at a profit of sixpence, or indigo at a profit of two shillings. The *ammon*, or better kind of rice, is more remunerative, but that is grown only where indigo is of no use. Nevertheless, it is declared that indigo, compared with rice, is a losing speculation to the ryot.

The above facts—which are only a few out of the many which might be cited on the same side—may give some idea of the encouragement afforded to independent enterprise in India when the independent enterpriser happens to incur the displeasure of the government, or even of the magistrate of the district in which he lives. And, looking at the treatment of indigo and its English planters, it is not wonderful that Lancashire should have some fears for the fate of cotton, and be indisposed to embark its capital upon the venture. It is but justice to the government, both in India and at home, to notice that some of the evils complained of are in a fair way of being remedied. The odious Mofussil courts, for instance, are being replaced by small cause courts, presided over by barristers, who, whatever their failings, will be free from corruption, and will administer an intelligible law. The sudder or high native court of appeal, is already merged into the supreme court, and competent and independent judges have jurisdiction in the provinces. The civil service is no longer a close service, but is open, under certain restrictions, to any qualified persons who may be found best fitted for particular posts. Non-official Europeans, as well as natives, are admitted into the legislative council, and their advice, instead of being received on sufferance from the outside, is forced upon the attention of the government. Moreover, by a recent enactment, the government waste lands may be purchased and held in fee simple by British settlers, and the land-tax may



be redeemed, if the owner pleases, by a capital payment.

These and other reforms are in progress, and although far from perfect, they will effect a great deal of good. Still, much remains to be done before the settler in India can have confidence in the country, and before he can be made to feel that his property and privileges are safe. Wherever the settlers and the natives are left to themselves they get on very well together, and the prosperity of the district is a proof of the mutual benefit that they receive. During the mutiny and the rebellion no indigo-planter was interfered with, except when he was found in arms assisting the government; and in several cases, as is well known, these gentlemen held their districts successfully after the authorities had fled. In the position of honorary magistrates several of them subsequently did good service, until deprived of those positions through official jealousy. It is only when the government interposes unnecessarily between the settler and the native that mischief arises, as in the affair of the indigo-planters which we have noticed.

What the settler still contends for, is a law which will give him the same right of enforcement of his contracts that the government take to themselves to enforce their own; to be encouraged by the government to stay in the country, instead of being thwarted at every turn; and to enjoy the benefits of a system of law which shall be a sufficient protection to his property. This is nearly all that he demands. He does not want to domineer or to dictate. He does not desire to oppress the native, with whom he is always ready to live upon friendly terms. He wants, in fact, the remains swept away of that policy by which he was once kept out of the country, and the spirit of which

even now exists in some high places. Considering the incalculable benefits which his presence confers—through the capital which he circulates, the industry which he employs, the example of energy and prudence which he sets—it can scarcely be said that he asks too much.

## VI.

### NIL DARPAN.

FOR some months during last year the overland mails from India, after giving us the customary budget of news—to the effect that it has been very hot somewhere, and hotter than ever somewhere else ; that pacification, reorganisation, regeneration, irrigation, and irritation, were going on as usual in different parts of the country ; that there had been a “ row ” at Simla between two officers of such high position as not to be revealed to the naked eye of the public ; that an ensign had been dismissed the service for conduct unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman towards his colonel’s wife’s poodle ; that the Hindoos and Mahomedans, in some place with an unpronounceable name, had been at open hostilities in consequence of a religious dispute, the Mahomedans having polluted a temple, and the Hindoos retaliated by defiling a mosque ; that there had been another case of Suttee, the authorities saying that they could not help it, and the usual investigation in which nothing is investigated having been set on foot ; that cotton was tranquil, corahs in a state of much anxiety, and mule twist in an undecided condition ;—after the customary budget of news, in fact, the mail generally told us that

Nil Darpan was still exciting a great deal of public attention.

What is Nil Darpan ?

This is a question still asked by a large proportion of the public, who have been goaded by frequent repetition into an unwilling curiosity. Is it a place or a person, or something to eat ? They have not the slightest idea, and the discussion has been going on for so long that it now seems hopeless to begin to read it up. Be it known that Nil Darpan is a play written by a native of Bengal, in the Bengalee language, and that the meaning of the title is "The Mirror of Indigo Planting:" the declared object of the author being to hold the mirror up to nature, and to give a reflexion of the system of indigo planting as now practised in Bengal. With the political quarrel, to which the circulation of this play by certain local authorities has given rise, we have nothing here to do ; but the reader may find some account of the circumstances which have led to the dispute, in the preceding chapter called Cotton and India, and it is right to state, in order that we may not be supposed to endorse the grave charges which the work contains, that not even the persons who gave it circulation pretend to justify those charges, which have some dim reference to a state of things which existed fifty years ago, but which, it has been declared by a recent official inquiry, has no foundation in the present day. That the satire is a malicious one, and written for a political object, there can be no doubt. And when it is remembered that the drama is a favourite medium among the Hindoos for the expression of public feeling, it becomes apparent that it is calculated not a little to mislead. Our object in noticing it here, however, is a literary rather than a political one ; and the reader who follows

our description should remember that Hindoo statements, even when not inspired by political prejudice, must always be taken with a great many grains of salt.

The Nil Darpan, we must give warning in the beginning, is not a very lively performance. It would have no chance of being listened to in any London theatre. We doubt, indeed, if all the art and knowledge of stage effect which have been spent on the Colleen Bawn could dress it up to the point of endurance. Nevertheless, it is quite of an airy character; it is as *Used Up to The Stranger*, compared with the majority of pieces on the Bengalee stage, which belong decidedly to the elephantine walks of the drama. The Nil Darpan is elephantine to be sure; but the elephant it resembles, is a sportive animal; it can dance, and stand on its head, and would have no objection to take wine with the clown.

Those of our readers who have ever lived in India, have probably seen a native play performed at a native gentleman's house. In Calcutta, if the visitor be a person of any note, he will receive more invitations to representations of the kind than he cares to accept. Let us suppose that he avails himself of the invitation of say, Baboo Simkinshrab Lalshrab Ghose, the great merchant and banker. The invitation is for eight o'clock, and, at about that hour, having dined at seven, and being already in evening dress, he sets out. His destination is sure to be a long way off, as the European gentleman would infallibly live in the best quarter of the town, and the native gentleman would as infallibly live in the worst—which is the native gentleman's fault by the way, as he came to the place first, and had first choice. The house of the guest is situated in a street very much like what Park-lane in London is; that of the host, in a street very like what Field-lane in London

was; the thoroughfare between the two is of course characterised by a gradual declension from bad to worse, until it becomes as bad as the worst can be. The approach to the house is indicated by a horrible odour of oil and natives: the two scents being the more associated through the fact of the latter having a habit of rubbing the former over their skins.

The effluvium of oil, however, proceeds mainly from large earthen pans with floating lights in them, placed along the road to mark the way, and from coloured lamps of the Vauxhall kind, neatly arranged wherever they can be most easily knocked down by the crowd; which is of a ragged and squalid description that we would defy anybody to find, out of the purlieus of an Eastern city. It is less ragged, perhaps, than it might be, if its members wore more clothes; for, as in the majority of cases the garment is confined to the neighbourhood of the waist, its holding on at all is a guarantee of its tolerable entirety; but with the slightest augmentation of the toilet, the dilapidations begin, and these have an extent which put decency and adornment equally out of the question. Moreover, as the season for entertainments such as that of Baboo Simkinshrab Lalshrab Ghose is generally the "cold weather," and as cold nights in Calcutta are very apt to be damp, you may imagine the mist in which the whole scene is enveloped, all the oil lights to the contrary notwithstanding. Muggy would be a cold word to describe the state of the atmosphere; and one of those roaring thoroughfares in London where they sell fried fish, and everything else that can be sold cheap to an overflowing population on a Saturday night in November, can give but a faint idea of the sights, and the sounds, and the scents that assail our visitor as he nears his destination.

Great men's houses in Eastern cities usually turn their backs upon the public thoroughfare, and this of the Baboo shows nothing but a wall and a gate to the common people. Our visitor has probably driven himself to the place in his buggy, and here his syce, or groom, extricates himself from his perch behind, and endeavours to induce the people, now crowded more densely than ever, to get out of the way. This is accomplished after a great deal of getting under the horse's head, among his legs, and we are not sure that we may not add through the spokes of the wheels, has been gone through on the part of the populace, and threats to "walk into" them with his whip on the part of the Sahib, who at last finds himself in the court-yard, or, "compound," as it is called—a curious word, which may be described, in racing parlance, as coming by Corruption out of Portuguese. Inside the gateway there are more lights than ever, both of the pan on the ground, and the Vauxhall variety, and on each side of the covered pathway, through which the Sahib, having alighted from his buggy, now proceeds, are statues the size of life: some popular, some classical, some both, and nearly all well known in Europe. They are cast in plaster for the most part, though one or two appear strangely built of wood, and are, in point of colour, what the heralds call "proper;" all are more or less dirty and damaged, and contribute their share to the general effect of the approaches to the place—which is that of the place having a great holiday, and holding a final festivity, previous to being indicted for a nuisance.

The house has a large open court in the centre, which, being covered over for the occasion, now forms the great reception hall. Around, and accessible by flights of stairs, both from inside and outside, are the private

apartments: to all of which the visitors have access, except those of the "ladies of the house," who may be observed, however, from behind semi-transparent screens, looking down upon the scene below with much curiosity, their chirpy voices suggesting the idea of innumerable birds upon branches. It is not considered well-bred to stare at the places whence these sounds come, or to take any notice, indeed, of the other signs of feminine existence, even though you occasionally see a pair of eyes shining through a (perhaps) chance hole in a curtain, or a hand and arm (beautifully braceleted) hastily closing the said curtain, which the said hand and arm have incautiously drawn aside. The hall, it must be said, is brilliantly lighted, and presents a general effect of mirrors, and gilding and oriental architecture, very pleasing to the eye. Below, upon a carpet, upon which no man not admitted to an equality may venture, is seated the host, smoking at intervals a hookah, which an attendant keeps studiously alight for him. It is here that he receives his guests, for whom, besides the play, he has provided such other amusements as can be obtained. Native minstrels in one part of the hall sing "*Taza, bataza, now be now,*" "*Hillee, pillie, punneah,*" and other popular native songs, besides some English songs, of the class of "Home, sweet home," which they murder most melodiously. Nautch girls, elsewhere, go through the graceful attitudes which here pass for ballet, accompanied by the monotonous chant, which is the local substitute for opera. In another place may be found native jugglers, who perform the most wonderful feats without exciting anybody's wonder, and the most extraordinary delusions with which nobody is deluded. Should any wandering performers from Europe—Ethiopian Serenaders, and the like—happen to be in Calcutta,



they will most probably be engaged ; and so you may choose between the east and the west in your music, as in your refreshments. As far as the latter are concerned, they consist mainly of attar and pân—the attar for the delectation of your fingers and your nose ; the pân to put into your mouth, and to eat if you can. But in a room upstairs, there is always laid out a British ball-supper, with chicken and ham, jelly, trifle, and all complete, with “champagne up to the mast-head,” as you may hear an enchanted ensign exclaim ; but with the strange addition of bottles of brandy placed all down the table, varied at intervals by bottles of beer. The natives have a great notion of the sahibs’ powers of drinking the two last named liquids, and I fancy they expect the very few European ladies, who are usually present on such occasions, also to indulge in them. Of course, the host does not himself sit down to the feast ; but the European guests, to do them justice, console themselves for his absence, and make themselves quite at home.

The play, which is the prominent entertainment of the evening, takes place most likely at one end of the hall, where a stage is fitted up after the manner of temporary erections of the kind in most other places—at a country-house in England, for example. In front are a sufficient number of seats for the more devoted adherents of the drama, who take their places at the beginning of the evening, and keep them until the end, whenever that may be. The latter period is a little doubtful, for nobody is in a hurry, and the construction of the drama appears to be such that it may end whenever the performers or the audience please, and may be carried on as long as either can keep awake. We doubt whether any of the European guests ever saw one out,

especially if they have been paying much attention to the supper up-stairs. But we believe the performance generally lasts all night, "and when they ring the morning bell, the battle scarce is done." The host, and any members of the family who please, may go to bed occasionally—the beds are great Paris or London machines, placed in the public rooms, and open to the observation of the company all the evening—getting up again if it so suits them, and looking in once more at the theatre; for "going to bed" is not such a grave matter in the east as in the west, and among the natives, at any rate, involves very little change of costume. The majority of the confirmed playgoers, however, seem to sit up all night, which they can do the more easily as they have probably slept half the day; and they sit listening to the eloquence of the author and the elocution of the actors, in a greater state of rapture than, in the case of a set of fat gentlemen in a perpetual state of perspiration, would be associated with western ideas of comfort. The character of the performance, as we have already remarked, is decidedly dreary. The girls are personated by boys, and the men by blackguards; and we will back an Eastern blackguard against his brother in the west, for a combination of almost every quality that can make the exhibition of human character unpleasant.

Everybody concerned in the exhibition appears to labour under the impression that art is short, and life is long, and that "take your time, Miss Lucy," is a moral and a model maxim. Action takes its chance, and dialogue has everything its own way. A disgusting-looking rascal on the stage, understood to be a king, has been holding forth for half an hour to a feminine-looking disreputability crouching at his feet. The fellow talks

so fast, and in a manner so different from that in which you are accustomed to hear the language spoken in private life, that you don't understand what is going on. You ask a native gentlemen, in the intervals of the puffing with which he tries to dismiss his perspiration, what the deuce it means ? He answers in general terms that the king is supposed to be angry. Another of the characters, with a most hang-dog appearance, has the conversation all to himself for a mortal half-hour, droning and whining to a distressing extent. You ask a placid and pân-consuming native what this personage is about, and you are informed in reply that he is jealous. It takes a long time to develop the passions—on the stage at least—in the east, and playgoers should have the patience of Job.

We mention these particulars in order to give the reader some idea of the dramatic treatment which the Nil Darpan would receive in its native land, and of the singularly cheerless character of the production which has made so much noise, not only in that land, but in our own. What it is “all about” we will now proceed to detail : first, however, as in duty bound, giving a list of the

#### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

who are

#### MEN.

Goluk Chunder Basu.

Nobin Madhab }  
Bindu Madhab } sons of Goluk Chunder.

Sadhu Churn, a neighbouring ryot.

Ray Churn, Sadhu's brother.

Gopi Churn Das, the dewan.

J. J. Rose, }  
P. P. Wood, } indigo planters.

The Amin, or land-measurer.

Akhalasi, a tent-pitcher

Taidgir, native superintendent of indigo cultivation.

Magistrate, Amla, Attorney, Deputy-inspector, Pundit, Keeper of the Jail, Doctor, a Cow-keeper, a Native Doctor, Four Boys, a Lattial, or Clubman, a Herdsman.

#### WOMEN.

Sabitri, wife of Goluk Chunder.

Soirindri, wife of Nobin.

Saralota, wife of Bindu Madhab.

Reboti, wife of Sadhu Churn.

Khetromani, daughter of Sadhu.

Aduri, maid-servant in Goluk Chunder's house.

Podi Moyrani, a sweetmeat-maker.

The first scene of the first act is laid at the gola, or storehouse, of Goluk Chunder Basu, a head ryot, or cultivator. He and a friend, Sadhu Churn, a neighbouring ryot, are discovered sitting. They have a mutual grievance, which both are discussing. They cannot live, they say, in Svarapur (the name of the district), where they used to be prosperous upon general crops, but which the European landholder has now reduced to a state of poverty (for everybody but himself) through insisting upon the plantation of indigo. He has even occupied, for the purpose, the ground about the tank, from which the women will henceforth be excluded, and he has threatened that Nobin Madhab, a son of Goluk Chunder Basu, shall drink the waters of seven factories—that is, be confined therein—unless due submission be made; nay, that the houses of the family shall be thrown into the river, and that the family shall eat their rice in the factory godown (cellar), unless they consent to the Sahib's wishes. To them enters Nobin, whom the father asks how he has prospered in his interview with the planter. "Sir," says Nobin, "does the cobra shrink from biting the little child on the lap of its mother, on

account of the sorrow of the mother? I flattered him much, but he understood nothing by that. He kept to his word, and said, 'Give us sixty bigahs of land, secured by written documents, and take fifty rupees, then we shall close the year's account at once.'” The father says this bargain will ruin them, as it will pervert them from growing rice; and he adds, “We have no chance in a dispute with the Sahibs. They bind and beat us. It is for us to suffer.” Nobin says that, for his part, he intends to bring the case into court. After that, *excunt omnes* to bathe.

The second scene is at the house of Sadhu Churn. Ray Churn enters with his plough, and makes some remarks, apparently addressed to that instrument, to the effect that the stupid Amin (land-measurer) is a tiger: he having just marked off five bigahs of his land to be sown with indigo. This will ruin him, he says, and his family will starve. He is interrupted in his recital of the family prospects by the entrance of Khetromani, Sadhu Churn's daughter, who, however, answers no dramatic end by her appearance, her mission being merely to say, in reply to a question, that her father will be there immediately, and to receive his respect for a “little water, as his stomach is on the point of bursting.” She goes for the water; in the meantime Sadhu enters; and the brothers then proceed with the discussion of their grievances, Sadhu especially apostrophising his “burnt forehead,” which is a metaphorical manner of expressing ill-fortune. Khetromani now returns with the water, and her uncle describes the quarrel he has had with the Amin, whose marking off of the ground was, he says, like thrusting burnt sticks into his body. The consultation is put an end to, by the appearance of the Amin himself, with two servants, who bind Ray Churn, and

tell him he must go with them to the factory, as he is wanted "to make signatures in the account books" (forged signatures of course): he being able to read and write, and the object of the planter being to show that contracts had been made for the cultivation of indigo. Ray Churn drinks his water and is carried off; but not before the Amin has cast eyes of admiration upon Khetromani, and made the remark that, having sold his sister to the Sahib for an overseer's post, he thinks he should get higher promotion if he could get Khetromani to sell also.

The scene then changes to the verandah of the large bungalow belonging to the factory of Begunbari. Here J. J. Wood, the proprietor, is found with Gopi Churn Das, his dewan, or head man, whom he is violently abusing for not getting in more advances from the ryots, and whom he threatens with a dose of "shamchand" (a leather strap) for his pains; taking down that instrument from the wall as an earnest of his intention. The dewan excuses himself most piteously, accusing his "evil forehead" (ill fortune) for allowing him to work like a slave for his master, without getting any credit for it. And he adds; "Sahib, what sign of fear hast thou seen in me? When I entered on the indigo profession, I threw off all fear, shame, and honour; and the destroying of cows, of Brahmins, of women, have become my ornaments, and I now lie down in bed keeping the jail as my pillow,"—that is to say, thinking of the jail, and expecting to go to it. While this improving conversation is proceeding, the Amin brings in Ray Churn, bound, with Sadhu accompanying him. Some of the scene which follows is worth giving textually:—

*Wood.* Why are this wicked fool's hands bound with cords

*Gopi.* My lord, this Sadhu Churn is a head ryot ; but through the enticement of Nobin Madhab, he has been led to engage in the destruction of indigo.

*Sadhu.* My lord, I do nothing unjust against your indigo, nor am I doing now, nor have I power to do anything wrong ; willingly or unwillingly, I have prepared the indigo, and also I am ready to make it this time. But then everything has its probability and improbability ; if you want to make powder of eight inches thickness to enter a pipe half an inch thick, will it not burst ? I am a poor ryot, keep only one and a half ploughs, have only twenty bigahs of land for cultivation ; and now, if I am to give nine bigahs out of that for indigo, that must occasion my death. But, my lord, what is that to you ? It is only my death !

*Gopi.* The Sahib fears lest you keep him confined in the godown of your eldest babu.

*Sadhu.* Now, Sir Dewanji, what you say is *striking a corpse* [*useless labour*] ; what mite am I that I should imprison the Sahib, mighty and glorious !

*Gopi.* Sadhu, now away with your high-flown language ; it does not sound well from the tongue of a peasant : it is like a sweeper's broom touching the body. [*The sweeper is a pariah, and his touch is contamination.*]

*Wood.* Now the rascal has become very wise.

*Amin.* That fool explains the laws and magistrate's orders to the common people, and thus raises confusion. His brother draws the ploughshare, and he uses the high word *pratāpshāli*—glorious !

*Gopi.* The child of the preparer of cow-dung balls [*the cheapest kind of fuel*] has become a court naeb [*legal officer.*] My lord, the establishment of schools in the villages has increased the violence of the ryots.

*Wood.* I shall write to our Indigo Planters' Association, to make a petition to government for stopping the schools in villages. We shall fight to secure stopping the schools.

*Amin.* That fool wants to bring the case into court.

*Wood.* (*To Sadhu.*) You are very wicked. You have twenty bigahs, of which, if you employ nine bigahs for indigo, why cannot you cultivate the other nine bigahs [*a little slip in arithmetic*] for rice ?

*Gopi.* My lord, the debt which is credited to him can be made use of for bringing the whole twenty bigahs within our own power.

*Sadhu.* (*To himself.*) O oh ! *The witness for the spirit-seller is*

*the drunkard ! (Openly.)* If the nine bigahs which are marked off for the cultivation of the indigo, were worked by the plough and kine of the factory, then could I use the other nine bigahs for rice. The work which is to be done in the rice-field is only a fourth of that which is necessary in the indigo-field ; consequently, if I am to remain engaged in these nine bigahs, the remaining eleven bigahs will be without cultivation.

*Wood.* You dolt ! You are very wicked, you scoundrel ! [*Háramjádá in the original, which is a stronger epithet.*] You must take the money in advance ; you must cultivate the land ; you are a very scoundrel. (*Kicks him.*) You shall leave off everything when you meet with shamchand. (*Takes shamchand, the leather strap, from the wall.*)

*Sadhu.* My lord, the hand is only blackened by killing a fly—your beating only injures you. I am too mean. We—

*Ray. (Angrily.)* O, my brother, you had better stop ; let them take what they can : our very stomach is on the point of falling down from hunger. The whole day is passed ; we have not been able yet either to bathe or take our food.

*Amin.* O rascal ! where is your court now ? (*Twists his ears.*)

*Ray. (With violent panting.)* I now die ! My mother ! my mother !

*Wood.* Beat that cursed nigger ! (*Beats with shamchand.*)

While this scene is enacting, Nobin Madhab enters ; he intercedes for Sadhu in vain ; the latter is led off to receive his fifty rupees in advance, and to engage to cultivate indigo, Gopi encouraging him with the assurance “ that ashes have fallen upon his ready-made rice ; ” that the “ Yama (Death, the King of terror) of Indigo has attacked him, and that he has no safety.”

In the next scene, which is laid in “ Goluk Chunder Basu’s hall,” we are introduced to Sabitri, wife of Goluk Chunder, Soirindri, wife of Nobin, Saralota, wife of Bindu Madhab, and Reboti, wife of Sadhu Churn. These ladies are all models of virtue and innocence, but all apparently yield the palm to Khetromani, who joins them, and whose modesty is such that she is found to have cut off the curls of her beautiful hair, because she



had heard that such adornments were becoming only to ladies either of rich family or loose character. In the course of conversation it becomes apparent that the designs of Amin upon the young lady are beginning to develop. A woman named Podi Moyrani, a sweetmeat-seller, noted for her intrigues, had been to Sadhu's house that day, and Reboti, Sadhu's wife, declares that the woman has told her "that the young Sahib has become mad, as it were, at seeing Khetromani, and wants to see her in the factory." Aduri, a maid-servant in the house, overhears the statement. Her manners have not, apparently, that repose which stamps the caste of her mistress. She is at once suspicious, and doesn't care who knows it; but the metaphorical manner in which she expresses her feelings would be considered rather strong on the British stage :—

*Aduri.* Fie! fie! fie! bad smell of the onion! Can we go to the Sahib? Fie! fie! bad smell of the onion! I shall never be out any more alone. I can bear every other thing, but the smell of the onion I never could bear. Fie! fie! bad smell of the onion!

It appears that the agent of the Sahib has said that if Khetromani refuses to go to the house, she will be brought away by force. Reboti says that it is easy for the planter to carry her away, as no ryot's wife is safe from him; the planters, one of the other ladies says, are not Sahibs, but they are the dregs (*chandál*) of Sahibs. They then go on to say that the planters get the magistrate to throw anybody who offends them into prison, and here the feminine nature breaks out into the scandal. Reboti says that "the wife of the planter, in order to make her husband's case strong (*pucla*), sent a letter to the magistrate, since it is said that the magistrate hears

her words most attentively." To this Aduri, the waiting-maid, whose want of repose in manner has been already noticed, adds a frank statement of her own experience. She says—"I saw the lady ; she has no shame at all. When the magistrate of the Zillah (whose name occasions great terror) goes riding about through the village, the lady also rides on horseback with him."

The scene concludes with the elder lady telling the two younger to go to the ghât together, while the evening light continues, and wash themselves ; a desirable process, doubtless, for, throughout the act, there are several allusions to the fact that none of the characters—owing to the hurried action of the drama—have had time to perform their ablutions during the day.

The second act begins with a scene at the godown (*cellar*) of Begunbari factory. Torapa and four other ryots are discovered sitting and abusing the planters. One says that they have nothing for it but to submit. "*Before sticks there can be no words.*" This, like several other sentences which we have marked in italics, is an aphorism in common use, and must not be understood as arising from the ready wit of the ryot. Another says that they must assert themselves. "*By speaking the truth we shall ride on horseback.*" The planters, he says, always get a good magistrate removed as soon as they can. In a district of which they are speaking, he says that the planters prepared a dinner for the magistrate, in order to get him into their power ; but he *concealed himself like a stolen cow*, and would not go. He was a person of good family. Why should he go to the dinner ? The planters are the low people of Belata, or England. Yet a former governor allowed himself to be feasted at the factories, like a bridegroom before the celebration of his marriage. Some of their number have composed

some verses, which are quoted in the course of conversation. One is—

“The man with eyes like those of a cat, is an ignorant fool :  
So the indigo of the indigo factory is an instrument of punishment.”

We must confess we do not see the bearing of the above. As a late facetious judge remarked of another judge who, he said, had been *trying* a joke : “His lordship has reserved the point.” Another quotation is more comprehensible :

“The missionaries have destroyed the caste ;  
The factory-monkeys have destroyed the rice.”

The conference is disturbed by the entrance of Gopi Churn, the Dewan, with Mr. Rose a planter, carrying his *ramkanta* : an instrument much resembling *shamchand*. The ryots are all beaten and kicked, and one of them falls in a position described in the stage direction as “*upside down on the ground*.”

The scene then changes to “the bedroom of Bindu Madhab,” whose wife is discovered reading a letter from her husband, who tells her of an accusation brought against his father by the planters. He intimates that he believes in the ultimate triumph of justice, because he is taught so by the works that he has studied. “My dear,” he says, “I have not forgotten the Bengalee translation of Shakespeare ; it cannot be got now in the shops ; but one of my friends, Bonkima by name, has given me one copy. When I come home I will bring it with me. My dear, what a great source of pleasure is the acquisition of learning !” The liberality of Bonkima appears to touch the heart of Saralota, but, like a true woman, she is sufficiently self-possessed for the duties of the toilet ; for, upon the entrance of Aduri

(the waiting-maid with the keen sense of the onion of treachery), she suggests to that damsel, "Let us now rub ourselves with oil in the cook-room." The scene then closes with "*exit* both" (in Bengalee Latin) for that purpose.

The next scene is mystically described as "a road pointing three ways," the kind of road, we suppose, that would be taken by the celebrated oyster which required a similar number of persons to swallow him whole. The woman Podi Moyrani is found indulging in a repentant soliloquy on account of the part she has been taking in placing the fair Khetromani in the power of the English Sahib. A cowherd comes and taunts her with having gone into the indigo business: but he is soon driven off by the lattial (club-man) of the factory, who makes love to her. But still her conscience pursues her, and makes her unpleasantly sensitive to raillery—a talent which the Hindoos have always greatly at their command. The lattial gone, four native boys come dancing round her, clapping their hands, and singing the following chant, which is Shakespearean in its simple force :—

" My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo ?  
 My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo ?  
 My dear Moyrani, where is your indigo ?"

Human nature can endure the shame no longer. The guilty woman flies from the face of her fellow-countrymen—behind the scenes.

The third act commences with a scene at the factory between Mr. Wood and Gopi, his Dewan, in which we gather that Nobin is ruined, his land taken away from him, and that he has been twice in court. The planter

discourses about his schemes in general, and of a native who writes against him in the newspapers. Gopi consoles him by saying, "Their papers can never stand before yours—can by no means bear a comparison ; and, moreover, they are as the earthen bottles for cooling water, compared with the jars of Dacca. But to bring the newspapers within your influence great expense has been incurred." That takes place according to time ; as is said—

"According to circumstances, the friend becomes the enemy :  
The lame ass is sold at the price of the horse."

There are more direct allusions in the course of the piece to the alleged corruption of some of the local journals

The next scene (the bedroom of Nobin Madhab) is mainly occupied by a consultation among the family as to the measure to be taken in consequence of Khetromani having been carried off. Reboti calls aloud for her daughter. "Bring me Khetromani ! bring me my puppet of gold !" Nobin, after a great deal of talk, prepares for action. "The indigo frog," he declares, "can never sit on the white water-lily-like constancy of a woman !" "The jewel," as one of the ladies says, with less grace, perhaps, but more force, "must be taken from the indigo-monkey," at any hazard.

In the scene which follows, the interest of the piece is worked up to the highest pitch. Mr. Rose is sitting in his chamber, and the woman Podi Moyrani brings the fair Khetromani to him. Khetromani remonstrates with Podi for the part she has taken, but Podi says, "You must speak to the Sahib ; to speak to me is like crying in the wilderness," The planter makes some unfeeling remarks ; but he is interrupted by Nobin and another

ryot breaking into the room. They rescue Khetromani and treat the planter with some roughness: Nobin, however, restraining his friend with beautiful hypocrisy by saying, "We ought not to be cruel because they are so." Then there comes a change to the "Hall in the house of Goluk." Sabitri, his wife, is lamenting that her husband has been summoned to the court. But with her bous (daughters-in-law) she seeks the old consolation of the toilette, and one of the stage directions in the scene is, "Saralota rubs the oil on her mother-in-law's body"—a precaution, by the way, much practised in the east before bathing, for the somewhat curious reason that it prevents the water from touching the skin.

The next scene is laid in the magistrate's court. Mr. Wood, the plaintiff, sits and talks with the magistrate, who asks his advice upon several points. Goluk is sentenced to pay two hundred rupees, or find sureties to that amount, binding him to plant indigo. In the course of the trial the magistrate writes a note to Mrs. Wood, the wife of the plaintiff, and despatches it by one of the court messengers, sending a message also to Mr. Wood's head butler, to say that his master will not be home to dinner. The magistrate and the plaintiff then leave the court together.

We are next introduced to the dwelling of Bindu Madhab, where Nobin Bindu and Sadhu are discovered, talking of Goluk, their father, who is now imprisoned by order of the magistrate, "the slave of the indigo-planters;" they also mention the "deadly sorrow" of Khetromani. All adjourn to the jail, where, on the scene changing, the dead body of Goluk is seen hanging by his outer garment, twisted like a rope. He has died by his own hand. Until the doctor arrives, the

policeman says he cannot cut the body down. As for the magistrate, he was not to be there for four days. "At Sachigunge, on Saturday, they have a champagne party, and ladies dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Sahib (the magistrate); that I saw, when I was a hearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind; through the influence of one letter she got me the jemedary of the jail."

In the fifth and last act there occurs in the first scene a conversation between Mr. Wood and his Dewan upon the subject of a disturbance among the ryots. The Dewan ventures to speak a little candidly, for which he gets knocked down and kicked, and called "a diabolical nigger." In the next scene, which is "The Bedroom of Nobin," that unfortunate ryot is brought in senseless, with a fractured skull, which he has received from the Sahib at the factory. Both he and his friend Torapa had made a brave resistance, but had been overpowered; but not before Torapa had made a rush at the elder Sahib (Wood) and bitten off his nose! "That nose I have kept with me," adds Torapa, in telling the story, "and when the baboo (Nobin) will rise up to life again I will show him that." (*Here he produces the nose.*) "Had the baboo been able to fly off himself, I would have taken his (Wood's) ears; but I would not have killed him, *as he is a creature of God.*" After this, all the ladies of the drama, and the entire female population of the neighbourhood, enter. Sabitri falls senseless at finding her son on the point of death; but Soirindri commands herself sufficiently to "sit near his mouth." Looking at Sabitri, she says, "As the cow losing her young wanders about with loud cries, then being bit by a serpent falls down dead on the field, so the mother is lying dead on the ground, being grieved

for her dear son." After this, she herself falls upon the breast of Nobin. Nobin's aunt tries to raise her from the ground, but fails, and falls also near her. Sabitri next goes mad, and talks wildly. A physician is afterwards brought to try and revive Nobin.

The following scene is laid in the "Room of the Sadhu Churn." Khetromani lies in great torment on her bed; Sadhu and Reboti are with her. The physician does all in his power, but she dies amidst the loud cries and lamentations of her family. Then comes the last scene, the "Hall in the house of Goluk," where Sabitri, still insane, is found sitting with the dead body of Nobin on her lap. She is performing some wild incantations, which are interrupted by Saralota, her daughter-in-law, whom she siezes in a frenzy and strangles—standing afterwards on her neck. Bindu Madhab, the husband of Saralota, enters during this proceeding. Bindu says that he cannot live now that his father is hanged, that his brother Nobin has died of his wounds, and that his mother has destroyed his wife. Upon hearing this, Sabitri suddenly recovers her understanding, and aroused to a sense of the crime she has committed, herself drops down dead. Her son kneels and weeps beside the body, taking some of the dust from her feet and placing it on his head, eating also some of the same dust, "to purify his body." Next appears Soirindri, who says that she is going to die with her husband Nobin, and will not be prevented. She runs out. Bindu makes a funeral oration upon the family, which he says "has been destroyed by indigo, the great destroyer of honour." The curtain falls, leaving him sitting, clasping his mother's feet.

Such is the drama of Nil Darpan—as far as its most essential features are concerned. Considering that it



pretends to be a true picture of the indigo-planting system, it would certainly warrant an investigation of the nature of that system on the part of government, were it not for the fact that the investigation was made the year before last, and that all the charges here so pathetically illustrated were found to be false. As a political squib, therefore, it comes rather late in the day. As a dramatic production, it may be sufficient to remark that it is about twice as long as *Macbeth*.

## VII.

### BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN INDIA.

MORE Englishmen is now the acknowledged want of India. The interest of England, as well as the interest of India, alike require them. England cannot afford to lose India. India will certainly be lost one day, unless she has more Englishmen. Political considerations, commercial considerations, philanthropic considerations, all point to the importance of persuading as many of our countrymen as possible to embark their fortunes in the gorgeous east. Security demands them, and says she trembles without them. Cotton cries for them, and says she must have them, and that is the long and short of the business. Philanthropy begs and entreats for them, and declares it to be their duty to go. More soldiers will not do. We can always get as many regiments as we can afford to pay for—and a few over if necessary—to do our work, when the work to be done happens to be war. But what we want are men to fight the battle of peace, and to form such a cheap defence as to render war unnecessary. More Englishmen being the acknowledged want of India, where is the difficulty in procuring them? Capital and enterprise on the one side, waiting for an outlet; the outlet on the other side,

waiting for capital and enterprise—one would fancy that the state of things could not be in better working order. But unfortunately, there are elements of discord which have, as yet, proved a serious obstacle to the settlement of Europeans in India. Of these, some are political; some are social; some are caused by old prejudice still influencing certain local authorities; some are caused by misunderstanding, mainly arising from ignorance, on the part of our countrymen at home. The government of the East India Company, it is known, never liked the “interloper,” and never even tolerated him until it was compelled to do so. The consequence was, that the interloper was badgered whenever possible by his official rulers, and his life made as miserable as it was convenient to make it, while the very bad reputation that he “enjoyed” at home, prevented him from gaining even sympathy, to say nothing of redress. In the latter respect, however, he was no worse off than the servants of government—civil and military—upon whose pastures he was considered a trespasser. Mulligatawny, the collector without a liver; Chutnee, the colonel subject to *delirium tremens*; Curry, the adventurer, labouring under both these drawbacks, have for years been favourite objects of sarcasm or reproach, among their countrymen in England. All were supposed to be equally remarkable for the disreputable nature of their private lives, and the corruption and cruelty of their public conduct. Now that the question of European settlement in India has become one of the most important of the day, it is especially desirable to enquire how far old prejudices and old delusions may tend to retard the accomplishment of the object. Towards this end the following notes are directed.

The question has often been asked—what is it that

makes the Great Briton in India so very different a person from the Great Briton at home? At home he is usually considered to be a sober, well-behaved, humane person; moderate and enlightened as to politics, and inclining, even in his errors, to the right side, being philanthropic to a fault, and a notorious cultivator of every mischievous propensity which can be indulged in under the form of a benevolent object. Take him to India, and there is a change indeed. His sobriety consists in being drunk from morning till night upon beer and brandy-pawnee; his good behaviour, in committing aggressions upon other mens' families, which are always bringing him before a certain fashionable court in this country; his vanity, in treating his black brethren in a style worthy of Legree, and torturing them with every imaginable weapon—from the open and avowed club, to the treacherous and insidious chili; his moderation, in making the most preposterous and impossible demands upon a series of governments, each more perfect, than the last; and his philanthropic charity in subscribing money to every object by which he can hoodwink his countrymen into allowing him pursue his barbarities with impunity.

What is it that works this change in the moral and respectable Briton? Long residence in India, perhaps, which causes him to imbibe local prejudice. This can scarcely be the cause, for we find men who have not been three months in the country, accused of the same failings. Is it that the voyage out demoralizes a man, and renders him unfit for civilization on shore? It is an old piece of satire which declares that an Englishman generally leaves his conscience at the Cape, and is but seldom known to bring it on with him to Calcutta or Bombay. But one would fancy that the Overland Route

had a more humanizing influence. The passengers are seldom, *all* of them, either old or young Indians ; they are varied in character, in positions, in pursuits. Surely they cannot all combine to poison the mind of the traveller, and demoralize his imagination before his arrival, and before he has an opportunity of judging for himself ! What then is the cause of the change which has been so often noticed ? I think I can let the reader into the secret in a few words. He will probably remember the celebrated answer of Charles II to his own question concerning the fish in the jar of water. The king said that he could not tell the reason why the water would not overflow when the bulk of the fish was added to it, because the fact was that it did overflow. Upon the same principle, the reason for the change cannot be told because the change does not take place. It is, in fact, a fiction, a delusion, a superstition, a weak invention of the enemy. *Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* The Englishman, when he goes out to India, may generally depend upon being the same Englishman when he comes back. Unless he be a very exceptional person, he is not likely to have any greater affection for delirium tremens, or other people's wives, or to manifest any decided taste for torture and slaughter, nor even for dishonest trading and peculation—which I omitted to mention among the failings usually ascribed to his class—than when he stood in all his English youth and innocence upon the deck of the steamer at Southampton. If he has any such tendencies, be sure that he is an exceptional person, as I have said, and in that case, be equally sure that you would have heard of his failings in Europe, with the difference only that, having the various laws of so many countries to coquet with, he would not have been so soon caught and hanged as

among the more centralized arrangements of our Indian empire.

But surely, may be remarked by the intelligent reader, there must be some cause for the accusations which have been brought against the Englishmen in India, even granting them to be untrue. Doubtless, would be the prompt reply of the intelligent writer, of course prepared for the question. There is plenty of cause for the accusations being made, unjust as they are ; and the English reader can scarcely be blamed for believing them to be true, since he hears the assertions made upon the best authority. For it is certain that if Englishmen in India have got a bad name, it is mainly because they have given it to themselves. When I first stayed in Calcutta, some few years ago, I was in a position that placed me apart from all local prejudices which I knew to be far from mild, but which I did not expect to find half so strong as they proved to be. I was independent of all classes, and at the same time I had ample opportunity for association with the best specimens of each. One day found me at the board of a "big civilian ;" the next, I was a guest at a regimental mess ; the following few days were passed, probably, at an indigo factory, or mingling in the town life of the merchants—which is very much like the town life of the members of any other class in the "City of Palaces" who live in the largest houses, and give the best entertainments. In this category, by the way, must be included the judges and barristers of the Supreme Court, who comprise a large number in themselves, and whose importance is second to none. Among these various descriptions of persons I lived in that state of harmony which is the nearest approach to happiness that I know. I found them as a general rule

intelligent, cultivated, amiable, and especially companionable; and one would have had no hesitation in forming a very high opinion of them all, but for the very low opinion they seemed to have of one another.

I do not mean to say that every class hated every other class. In nearly every case the feeling was confined to some particular class, which was the favourite object of aversion. If you asked a military man, for instance, what his opinion was of Indian people, he would probably tell you that the lawyers were very good fellows, and the merchants and planters—especially the latter—first-raters; (“Give you the best pig-sticking, and all that sort of thing, in Bengal, my boy!”) But ask him what he thought of the civilians, and he would frankly inform you that he did not like them at all; that on the strength of being immensely overpaid for monopolising all the best appointments, they “gave themselves airs,” thought everybody else beneath them, and were intolerable in society, unless society was prepared to take them at their own valuation—which a society imbued with sound commercial principles was seldom willing to do. The merchants and planters were even more inveterate against this unfortunate class, and would make the gravest charges in connexion with their alleged maladministrations, and sacrifice of the peace and security of the country to their own interests. Of these opinions the lawyers and the journals were frequently made the mouth-piece, so that Calcutta was seldom free from a rousing controversy, which generally set everybody by the ears. In addition to these elements of discord, I should not omit to mention another class, who were even better haters than the others\* of the civilians. These were the subordinate members of the same service, not blessed with what is called a covenant,

(equivalent to a commission in the army), who had been taken into the government pay to do certain work, and who could be dismissed from all employment if they ceased to please their official superiors.

Among these men, it must be said, were some of high standing and position, apart from the members of the bar who are in public employ, and who are necessarily among the "Uncovenanted"—as indeed is the Governor-General himself for that matter. Apart from these, there are men of high talents and attainments in the ranks of the Uncovenanted service, who cannot by any possibility—except in the non-regulation provinces—attain beyond a certain standing; and these, as well as *their* subordinates—who, through a pardonable weakness, fancy themselves also fitted for the highest posts—are in a chronic state of irritation with the powers that be; and as they are supposed to neglect no opportunity of injuring their superiors in a secret manner, their superiors neglect no opportunity of subjecting them to that exasperating kind of depression which is described by the phrase "letting them know their place." Now this process being quite unnecessary, inasmuch as the place in question is apt to be too well known to its occupants, who desire to change it for a better one, the effect of the treatment upon the patients' temper may be easily supposed not very soothing. And in addition, the Uncovenanted have, for the most part, to submit to the odium of being nobodies in society—that is to say, of not being let into "society" proper, at all. This also is unjust; for there are many among them who deserve better treatment than they receive. The discontent of this class is shared by that portion of the trading classes who do not rank as merchants, and who, although always in easy, and frequently in opulent cir-



cumstances, do not somehow find a general recognition of their title to rank with the magnates of the land. These worthy persons consider it a grievance that, notwithstanding their ability to keep up expensive houses and horses, and to give each other dinners overflowing with Champagne (all other beverage, unless it be sparkling Moselle, is now voted low in Calcutta), that the great do not court their acquaintance with that avidity which these attractions would seem to command. It is very weak, doubtless, to indulge in such feelings, for the obviously dignified and independent course is to treat all persons who don't want to know you, with the contempt they deserve. But our more humble friends are not alone in the failing; and I fear that the social jealousies of Calcutta have contributed considerably towards the disunion which exists in that city among the various classes of our countrymen.

I cannot think it quite in the best taste, for instance, for a lady, a leader of society, to say to a friend, in answer to an enquiry whether she happened to know an officer newly arrived,—“No, he called here, but we don't wish to increase our barrack acquaintances,” or to patronize a friend from the Mofussil with the remark,—“I'm afraid you'll find our society very exacting here, compared with what you have been accustomed to up-country.” Nor, indeed, do I think it in any better taste for a tradesman to put out his hand for a customer to shake on the latter leaving the shop, there having been no more friendly relations between the pair than the purchase of some cheroots, and a slight conversation about the weather. I cannot say that this is the custom in Calcutta, but such a thing has been seen occasionally. The proceeding would scarcely be demanded by the extent of the acquaintance, even had a formal intro-

duction taken place, and the pair met in private society; and it was for this reason, I suppose, that a gentleman who was so honored upon one occasion, (he was very young and had just succeeded to a baronetcy, which I suppose will be considered an excuse) pushed his own hands down into the uttermost depths of his peg-top pockets, looked the tradesman in the face, and drily said, "Very sorry, my dear sir, but it can't be done."

Nor do I much commend the gentleman in the jewelry line, who, in answer to a question from a customer, engaged in doubtful dalliance with some shirt studs, as to whether those articles were "worn," replied, "I assure you that they are, you see I wear them myself."

"In that case I would rather not have them," was the not ill-deserved rejoinder.

These are not very important matters, but they serve to illustrate the tone of society, composed of not very harmonious elements in any case, and rendered still less reconcilable by the peculiar nature of our position in India, and the still more peculiar manner in which our system of government has tended to make the most of its difficulties. One fact is obvious, that the question of "Who's who," is a very important matter in Calcutta, where it is very far from resolving itself into "What's what," which it is fast doing in England. It is so important indeed, as to be destructive to the mingling of classes even upon any common ground, as we find them mingling at home—and any good feeling between them is therefore difficult. At public entertainments in England, both in and out of doors, men and women of almost all grades assemble together. But in Calcutta this is very seldom the case. The upper ranks will seldom consent to "assist" upon an occasion which is not confined exclusively to themselves, and they urge as an excuse, that

when they have consented to depart from their custom the lower classes have been generally obtrusive and impertinent. Upon this question I can only make the well-known commentary, that "a great deal may be said on both sides," and lament that such is the fact, for it makes Calcutta a far less pleasant place to live in than it would otherwise be, and adds, I am convinced, considerably to the heat of the weather.

In the provinces the state of things is the same, or worse. There is less formality and precision in the manners of society itself, but the classes which it includes are far more limited than even in Calcutta, and "the services" are in an overwhelming majority. Not that the services are to blame for their exclusiveness, for it is not always that there are any presentable people in an up-country station out of their own ranks; when there are, they certainly receive every attention, and have no reason to complain of being "put down." As for the "under crust" of society in the Mofussil, I am afraid that very little can be said in its favour. Men who would have to resort to manual labour in England, are found making large incomes—fortunes in some cases—by retail merchandize; and women, who at home would scarcely attain the posts of maid-servants, assist them in making the most clumsy and ridiculous aspirations towards a "position in society," the great object of their existence, for which they would barter the best part of their gains, and beggar themselves as they frequently do. The desire of these persons to secure the best places—at the band-stand, where they appear in their carriages—at the amateur theatricals—even at church, amounts to something like a passion, and I do not envy the reputation of any person out of their own class who attempts to thwart them in their

aspirations. I think it right to make these remarks, because nearly every writer upon social life in India notices the other side of the picture, and while pointing out the exclusiveness of the upper ranks, omits to mention the penalties attendant upon any wide deviation from the ordinary forms, which would render life in India, under present conditions, nothing less than a nuisance.

Everywhere, indeed, in the upper provinces, is the traveller and the resident exposed to the elbowing of a class of his countrymen whose neighbourhood a man must be very liberal-minded indeed to seek, in any country, if he has a choice in the matter; and this is especially the case since the mutinies, when a crowd of speculators have been enabled to emerge from their previous obscurity, and take advantage of the state of the provincial market to sell European commodities at prices which, to everybody but those who have had to pay them, seem fabulous indeed. I do not mean to infer that there are not respectable men among the class; indeed there are conspicuous instances of such; but the majority, it must be confessed, neither in character nor conduct are very creditable to our country. Many of these, as well as of the humbler classes generally, subordinate employés of government, are "Eurasians," or "Indo-Britons." The former word is, of course, a compound from *Europe* and *Asia*. This is an unfortunate class. Notwithstanding that they number in their ranks a large proportion of respectable and intelligent men, there are yet so many among them who combine some of the worst qualities of the two races from which they spring, as to have given a decidedly bad character to the whole. It is only under very exceptional circumstances that an Eurasian can take rank as a gentleman

among Europeans, and by the natives he is generally despised.

This large population of discordant elements is comparatively a new feature in India—having materially increased of late years. It is one of the penalties that we have to pay for the “development of the resources of the country,” regarding which Indian reformers talk so much and with such little effect.

I have said nothing of the desperate adventurers—men fallen generally from better things—who are unhappily becoming less uncommon in the country every month. How these wretched men live it is difficult to say ; but that they do manage to carry on for a long time is certain ; for many of them frequently contrive to travel from one end of the country to the other, obtaining employment here and there, which they are too free-born to keep, and apparently leading a tolerably contented life, since they are seldom seen otherwise than drunk.

To return, however, from a digression. There is no more popular topic of conversation among the English in India than the ignorance of “people at home” upon all matters concerning them. Wherever two Anglo-Indians meet, and find that they have nothing in particular to say, *this* subject is always safe. It is one upon which they are certain to agree, and to which each is usually able to contribute some new matter. You pay a morning visit, we will say, to the Chutneys. Chutney is of the civil service. He has a pretty little wife, and a pretty large appointment—the first having “brought him” nothing at all, and the second bringing him some four or five thousand a year. He is engaged in earning the second in his kutcherry when you call, and leaves the first to amuse the visitors, or to be amused by them, as the case may be. It is

possible that the object may be a difficult one to accomplish on either side. An ensign, having nothing to say during a visit of ceremony, is recorded to have wished that somebody was dead, in order that he might be able to communicate the fact to the lady of the house. I have never gone to this sanguinary extent in my pursuit of topics; but I think, if I put my conscience under cross-examination, I should be obliged to own that I might not have felt much grieved, under the circumstances, at hearing that the brigadier had been thrown from his horse and broken his arm, or that the judge's wife had run away with a gentleman singularly unlike the judge—provided that it had been my fortune to get the first news of these unhappy events. Supposing, then, that nothing is going wrong worth talking about in the station, and things that are going right present no features of interest, this ignorance of “people at home” upon matters relating to India, is always a splendid topic to fall back upon. The last mail is sure to supply an illustration. Mrs. Chutney, for instance, upon the first symptoms of a lull in the conversation, will perhaps tell you a capital story of the kind, as she did to me last year—and it was to this effect.

An officer in the Punjaub made a sketch of a scene in that province, and sent it for publication to an illustrated journal in London—there are so many illustrated journals now that I need not be afraid of being charged with making any particular allusion.

The Punjaub (as the reader, who is doubtless better informed than the rest of the public, probably knows,) is a singularly open country, where large trees are “conspicuous by their absence,” and where most of the outward characteristics of an eastern clime are found wanting. His sketch was pronounced by the acutest critics at

the mess, to be "very ugly and very like," and so it probably was. It was duly despatched, and nearly forgotten, when, three months afterwards, the outward Indian mail bore in its bosom (that is to say, in one of those square boxes which the admiralty agent is always so fidgetty about) a copy of the \* \* (no earthly power shall induce me to give up the name), addressed to the officer in question. The paper was eagerly opened, and in its middle, in the most conspicuous position, appeared the sketch. The sketch—but so "transmogrified," to use the artist's own expression, as to be scarcely recognizable even by its parent. It was all palm trees. In the foreground they stood out in rich masses; in the middle distance they appeared less conspicuously, but still unmistakable, with their long, strait, and bare stems, crowned with leafy luxuriance. In the extreme distance they might be seen, growing out of the edge of the horizon, and sharply cut against the clear sky. Palm trees, in fact, pervaded the picture. It was all palm trees, with just a bit of river, and a scrap of mountain, and a ruined temple, put in to keep them in countenance, to connect them, in fact; and I need scarcely add that not a single palm tree had appeared in the original sketch. The artist was in what his friends called a "bestly rage," but which I will be content with alluding to as a pardonable passion; and in this spirit he despatched a vigorous remonstrance to the "publisher, or editor, or whatever you call the rascal," by the next mail. Something like another three months rolled on, when out came a rejoinder. The "publisher, or editor, or whatever you call the rascal," was very sorry; the sketch was a very welcome one, and in case the artist should care about remuneration, he enclosed a cheque for a not unhandsome amount; but it had been found

necessary to make some additions to it, as the fact was that the public would not have any Eastern scene without palm trees. The public demanded palm trees, and the public would have them. It was of no use being truthful if nobody believed you, and so palm trees must be put in, even at the sacrifice of truth.

This story, set going, I believe, at first by little Mrs. Chutney, made a profound impression upon us all in the north-west provinces of Bengal; and I have no doubt that at the presidency, as well as in Madras and Bombay, it obtained equal attention. It was told in the early morning, when the English sally forth and endeavour to steal a march upon the sun. It was told upon the parade ground. It was told in kutcherry. It was told at the mess, (I should like to know any piece of gossip, for good or for evil, that was not told *there*). It was told in the shade of the afternoon verandah, amidst the crash of the band-stand, and the glare of the burra khana. It was told all over the station, and all over the world of the presidency, and the provinces; and it was everywhere considered to be a type of the mistaken ideas prevalent among "people at home," with regard to people in India, and everything relating to that country. It is of no use telling "people at home" simple facts concerning India; they will have the palm trees which their prejudices have always been accustomed to, or they will not listen, and still less are they likely to believe. I do not confess to being blinded by my Anglo-Indian partialities, but I can't help seeing a great many more palm trees than I could wish, both in political and social pictures of India as delineated at home. At the same time I must not altogether blame "people at home" for adopting erroneous ideas. When men are utterly ignorant they cannot well be otherwise



than impartial, and "people at home" may say on their own behalf, "We cannot misrepresent matters of which we know nothing; what we know we have gathered from Anglo-Indians themselves, and it is their fault if they have deceived us." This is true enough; and the home mis-information upon Indian matters is caused, I am afraid, by the fact, that out of every five hundred persons in this country, four hundred and ninety-nine know nothing about the present state of affairs in India except from hearsay, and that the other one, who speaks from experience, is, either consciously or unconsciously apt to mislead.

It is a very bad thing, to be ignorant of all matters relating to a country like India. It is still worse to be misinformed. But it is worse than being either utterly ignorant or lamentably misinformed, to be so indifferent as not to care about acquiring knowledge in the place of nothing at all, or truth in the place of falsehood, when that plant happens to have evinced its usual vigour in taking root. And this is the condition, it is to be feared, of the larger proportion of our countrymen in reference to the "brightest jewel of the British crown." In Parliament India is voted a bore and a nuisance. An Indian question generally clears the house, unless either one side or the other has a party object in ventilating it. In society Indians are very apt to be considered, if not bores and nuisances, something very little better; and they very soon find that their powers of pleasing are exercised most successfully when they refrain from talking about India. The only persons among "people at home," who at all delight in troubling themselves about the country, are the professed philanthropists and the missionaries. Against the intentions of these persons I should be sorry to say a word; but

their zeal is, I fear, frequently thrown away, through natural difficulties in some cases, and in others, it must be said, through indiscretion in its mode of exercise. To the general knowledge of the country to which their labours are devoted, I am afraid they add but little ; while they certainly do not, by the manner in which they discuss it, contribute to the attractiveness of the subject.

As an illustration of the kind of prejudice which exists against Anglo-Indians on the part of "people at home," I may mention the following incident, for the truth of which I can vouch. The story was told to me by a member of the civil service, and he was the hero of it upon the occasion of his last visit to Europe, before the mutinies, when he was driven into British ports by stress of liver.

My friend was indulging his innocent tastes by living in a harmless suburb not far from Hyde Park. Past his peaceful residence went many omnibuses to and fro ; between happy homes, and banks and clubs, and places of the kind where men must go, however happy their homes may be. One morning, in an evil hour (if I may speak so disrespectfully of half-past eleven) he stopped one of these vehicles with the intention of proceeding therein to town. He had a small—an insignificant—leather bag, containing some evening dress, in which he designed to disport himself that night at dinner. Having some books under his arm, he allowed this bag to be carried to the conveyance by a female servant. Nothing so natural, if one's establishment does not include a man. But unfortunately the female happened to be a native Indian woman, known in domestic life as an ayah. And

so there was a cry from the other twelve passengers:—"Look at this man? How disgraceful! He is like all the rest of these Nabobs. They make the poor natives their slaves. She would get dreadfully beaten if she refused to do the work of a horse;"—and so forth. And the twelve passengers all scowled upon him, and shrank from his touch when he sat in among them; and during all that long and dreary journey, not one volunteered to him an observation upon the weather, or asked him "What he thought of Lewis Napoleon *now*?" In short, as far as the twelve persons in the omnibus were concerned, he was an outcast among his fellow men.

Now this was rather hard upon my poor friend, who was certainly not a Nabob—he only wished he was,—and who during his service in the East had always shown himself as humane and considerate a person to the natives as could well be, a fact for which his wife's servant, and his own alleged slave, would have cheerfully vouched, had she been appealed to on the subject. But, as I said to him afterwards, when he told me the story, the blame rested less with the British public (who may be generally considered fairly represented by any twelve persons who ride in an omnibus) than with his own brethren in the East, who lose no opportunity of reviling one another to their fellow-countrymen at home. It may be that the latter are in fault for being over-credulous and wanting in judgment; but suppose the contrary case. Suppose that the people of England were strenuously engaged in influencing the people of India in a similar manner; suppose that the farmers neglected no opportunity, through the press, through private correspondence, and personal communication, of assuring their friends in India, that the manufacturers were a set

of robbers and extortioners ; suppose that the manufacturers retorted a similar complaint upon the farmers ; suppose that both combined to give the worst possible character to the government officials, and that the government officials occupied the greater portion of their official leisure in representing everybody not included in their own body to be enemies of the state, whom the state would do well to transplant to some other state as soon as possible. I am afraid our friends in the East would be inclined to consider a great many of these accusations true, and that the reputation of Englishmen would suffer considerably in their eyes. Yet this is something like the process by which Anglo-Indians have been endeavouring for many years past to "gain their private ends," and now they are surprised to find that they have succeeded only in losing them, that the ends will not meet by any means.

But, accepting the reasons alleged for the manner in which Anglo-Indians are misunderstood at home, it may be said, Surely this antagonism of classes has not arisen without a cause, since the Englishman does not care to be an Englishman merely through his residence in India, and Englishmen at home, though they have their class interests and agitations, yet contrive to agree tolerably well, treat one another with respect, and unite when necessary for the common good. That there is a cause may be safely taken for granted. It is deep in "the system" upon which the country has been hitherto governed, and which her Majesty's accession to the rule of her own dominions has not yet been effectual to remove. I allude to the anomalous position of Europeans in India.

India is a conquered country. It is a favourite fancy of certain crotchety politicians to declare that it is not—

upon the ground that if the entire country were to rise "as one man" it might be sufficient to overwhelm even the present strong European force at the disposal of the government. But this argument would apply equally well to almost any country that ever was subjected to a foreign yoke.

Nations never rise as one man, however much they may be inclined to do so; but if any nation were to make the attempt, a sufficient check could be given even with less military means than are disposable in the present case, long before the process could be effected, granting always that disaffection is not perversely treated as loyalty, and that the danger is fairly looked in the face. The country, then, being a conquered one, it follows that the policy of its rulers should be to treat the conquering race with all possible respect; and to welcome the addition of every individual member of that race to its shores, as an augmentation of strength to the government, a guarantee of the security of our rule, and therefore an assurance of that happiness and prosperity to the native population which it is the boasted object of our rulers to maintain. But such a policy has, unfortunately, never been that of the "Company of merchants, trading to the East Indies," the directors of which, after realizing an empire out of their transactions, discovered, like a great many retired old gentlemen in smaller ways of business, that commerce was "low," that it was unnecessary for the welfare of the country, and that the best means of dealing with the material at their disposal, so as to make it yield the largest amount of profit (to themselves) was to govern upon a system of secrecy and compromise, under a pretence of liberality to the

natives, and to dread, of all things, the eyes and ears of their own countrymen, who have an awkward habit of seeing and hearing more than is required of them, and of telling disagreeable truths.

With these unpleasant persons they had a very summary way of dealing in the good old times. No sooner did a man want to know too much, or having succeeded in knowing, evince a disposition to tell, than he found himself seized, taken on board ship, and before he had time to look round him, under full sail for his native land. After a time, however, this system was found not to "pay." The man made himself such a nuisance when he got back to England, and the scandal created by the proceeding became so great, that the home government, though generally unwilling to interfere with the innocent enjoyments of the local authorities, found it necessary to do so. Accordingly the practice was disallowed, and the European obtained the right to reside in India—the government, of course, reserving to themselves the privilege of making his residence as miserable as possible.

But notwithstanding the laudable efforts made by a paternal government to render his life a burden to him, the Anglo-Saxon still found his way to India. Either he liked being despised, or he contrived to console himself for his abasement by means of rupees, which certainly *do* come tumbling in in India as they do nowhere else. And as he increased in numbers, his importance increased also, and putting him down became no such easy matter. The natives began to discover that as good gentlemen came to the country out of the Company's service as in it; and even the government could not avoid perceiving that the "Inter-

loper" was the main source of the general prosperity. It was all very well to supply good government, but this could be supplied only upon condition of receiving a good revenue; and there was no such security for this as the development of the commercial and industrial resources of the empire. "*Revenue avant tout*" has always been the understood maxim of the rulers of India in the good old times; and so impressed were they with its importance that they made all their cleverest men collectors, the second-rate men being put off as mere magistrates, or, when they showed any remarkable signs of unfitness or incapacity in other departments, elevated to the judicial bench. This system, by the way, has survived in full force to our own time; and it was only a couple of years ago that an official in the North-West—a far cleverer man, however, than the majority of those who come to such an end—was, for a conspicuous breach of public decorum, not exactly inspired by Father Mathew, transferred from the position of a commissioner to that of a judge. We should stare rather in Europe if the head of a public office was to fall into disgrace, and—having had a purely official training—was to be made one of the barons of the Court of Exchequer for his pains; but such things are matters of course in India, and people have ceased even to laugh at them.

But to return. Notwithstanding that the government was forced to appreciate the value of the interloper, it still did not like him. And, unfortunately, a large portion of the executive found their own interests so endangered by his presence in the country—or persuaded themselves that such was the case,—that they neglected no means to disgust him and drive him home, or failing

in that object, to bring upon him odium and disrepute. These gentlemen, belonging to the exclusive civil service, found the interloper threatening to compete with them for a share in the loaves and fishes of the state; or if not actuated by any such object—of which, it must be said, he was generally independent,—he yet contrived to make himself particularly disagreeable by his bad habits of observation and inquiry; peering into things that went wrong, and even being impertinent enough occasionally to attempt to set them right. Accordingly the traditional policy of “war with the interloper” found no lack of support among the great majority of the servants of government; and it became the custom by degrees to blame the one class for every difficulty experienced by the other, more especially if it happened to be caused entirely by the fault of the latter.

The strife became worse as the number of non-official Europeans increased. The “British born subject,” protected by the Supreme Court in the presidencies, and amenable in the provinces to the authority of the company’s servants only in so far as cases of misdemeanour or small monetary transactions were concerned, naturally became somewhat unmanageable, and was not regarded with particular favour by the local authorities. It was from time to time attempted by the government to place him under their jurisdiction by the amalgamation of the Supreme Court with the head Court of Appeal—a court very unfavourably known to Anglo-Indians as “the Sudder;” and one Thomas Babington Macaulay was set to work to construct a code which should deal forth equal justice to every class in the country. But years passed, and the code, though sat upon and reported upon, and revised and improved, was never found to meet the difficulty; and the last attempt to introduce



the "Black Acts" as they were called, at the beginning of 1857, resulted in such a storm of opposition from the non-official population that the measure was indefinitely postponed; and the Court of Directors, taking alarm at the outbreak which almost immediately afterwards took place, sent out an order that no act affecting the position of Europeans in India should be passed by the local government without a previous reference home. But for the outbreak the Black Acts would surely have been passed; for much of the ancient jealousy between the Supreme Court and the Indian government had been removed by the admission of the judges of that court to seats in the Legislative Council; and upon this occasion the measure of the government found supporters among their number. Upon the one side it was declared that the interloper could not be kept in proper order in the provinces without additional authority; that even in cases of murder the expense of sending him to the presidencies for trial was greater than should be properly incurred by the state, and that after all the expense, to say nothing of the trouble, a jury of his countrymen were very apt—if the offence was committed against a native—to defeat the ends of justice and allow him to escape. On the other hand the interloper and his friends said: "We have no objection to be made amenable to the provincial courts if you will allow us the same protection which the law of England allows us at the presidencies. But we decidedly object to be tried by a native, who in nine cases out of ten is notoriously corrupt; to have the proceedings conducted against us in a language which we cannot understand; and to forfeit the protection of a jury of our own countrymen which, although not much consolation to a gentleman about to be hanged, will at any rate afford him the

satisfaction of not being hanged without good cause. If you reform your courts we have no objection to be made amenable to them, and we think your best policy would be to raise those courts to the English standard instead of degrading Englishmen to their level." To this was returned, by the more conciliatory class of Black Act-ers, a rejoinder which was intended to be delusive, but which somehow failed to delude: "My good friends, there is no fear of an Englishman not receiving justice. It is his birthright, and he will find it wherever the British flag waves. Let but a single Englishman receive an injury from the provincial courts, and there will be such an uproar that their reformation must inevitably follow." But this argument seemed so like that of the injudicious barrister who attempted to console his remonstrating client by the assurance, "Let them hang you my boy and I'll make them repent it," that the British-born subject failed to appreciate its wisdom, preferring the more prudential arrangement of having the courts cleaned out before entrusting himself to their atmosphere, rather than to take his chance of sanatory measures being adopted towards them after they had, possibly, killed him with their ill-odour.

I may here observe, by the way, that the interloper enjoyed whatever satisfaction may be derived from being oppressed by his own countrymen, during the progress of the rebellion, when he was included in the Arms Act, which it was found necessary to impose upon the natives, and in the Press Act, which placed English newspapers under government control, because native newspapers published sedition. He had also the satisfaction of seeing the native judges, under whose jurisdiction he had objected to be placed, turn against

the government, in many cases, and shew their gratitude for the confidence placed in them, by being guilty of some of the worst crimes committed during that year of horrors, 1857.

What the interloper asked for, and what he has been asking for up to the present time, is that he shall have the privilege of living in India upon the same terms as in any other of the British possessions. That he shall, in any part of the country, enjoy the protection of the British law. That the "Company's" (I use the exploded term for want of another) magistrates and judges shall be trained in law, instead of being mere officials moved about from one employment to the other and that they shall be independent of the government under the same conditions as in England. Further, that he shall have the privilege of purchasing land, where land is purchasable, in fee simple; and—in especial reference to the case of planters—it is also urged that there shall be a new law of contracts, so as to secure from the Cultivator the performance of work for which he has received payment in advance.

A considerable instalment of these demands has been granted by the measures of Indian Reform passed last session; and the avowed policy of the government now is to encourage the interloper by every possible means. Difficulties political, however, as well as difficulties social, still exist; and it is to be feared that much remains to be done before the new policy will bear fruit.

The great enemies of the settlers, as I have observed, are generally considered to be the members of the civil service—the exclusive "covenanted" service which so long ruled in India—the nominees of the directors, from the families of whom they were for the most part

selected. It is not unnatural that these gentlemen should be somewhat disgusted at the ruthless manner in which their privileges have been invaded of late years, more especially by the introduction of the competitive system. But they have for the most part accepted the change in a liberal spirit, and welcomed the new men among them with all frankness and good will; and in the same manner they have for years past reconciled themselves to the presence of their non-official countrymen, everywhere except in and near Calcutta, where the interloper, and certain of the authorities, are as hostile as ever. In Bombay and Madras there is of course some little jealousy existing between the two classes—as is indicated by many of the social peculiarities noticed in the proceeding pages—which may be observed, more or less, in the three presidencies. But whatever feeling exists in those parts is very seldom strongly manifested; and the same remark will apply to the North-West Provinces of Bengal, the Punjaub, and Oude, where the civilians have from the first been trained in a better school than that of Bengal, and do justice to their training. In all these places the non-officials get on very well with the authorities, and whenever there is anything like parity of social rank, mingle with them on friendly terms. Even in Bengal there has been a great deal of good fellowship between the planters and the officials; and the latter are certainly not all of the same stamp as the opponents of the former in the “indigo dispute,” about which we have heard so much for the last year and a half. There are as liberal men among them as in the North-West, or elsewhere; but somehow, not a hundred miles from Calcutta, I am afraid there are some of the body who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing since the days of John

Company and the supremacy of the exclusive civil service. They have the same old dislike of the interloper, and spare no pains, since they can no longer turn him out of the country, in making him as miserable as possible in it. The indigo dispute, although it has figured a great deal in the newspapers, is not so generally understood as it should be. Yet the facts are simple enough. The planters, in compliance with a custom of the country from time immemorial, made advances of money to the native cultivators for the growth of indigo, and the native cultivators, not being particularly industrious, were in many cases somewhat deeply in their debt. This would not have much mattered. The planters charged no interest, and were content to go on advancing, if necessary, so that they got the work done. But happening to offend a certain magistrate (scandal says, for some private reasons which I need not particularize), the certain magistrate took advantage of a certain minute issued by the chief authority, and issued a certain proclamation informing the cultivators that they would not be compelled to work out the advances which they had received, unless it so pleased them. Of course it did not so please them. What class of men is there who would have been so pleased? I should be sorry to try even that meritorious person the British workman by so severe a test. The cultivators, one and all, repudiated their engagements, and having jumped to the not unnatural conclusion that the government was hostile to the planters, and wished to drive them out of the country, they determined to do their best to gratify the government in the matter. Hence the deplorable state of Lower Bengal for some time past; outrages against the planters; resistance to even government authority;

and refusal, eventually, to pay rent. The late Mr. Wilson passed an Act through the Legislative Council, making breach of contract between master and workman a misdemeanour. The law worked wonderfully well, and ceased to be beneficial only when it ceased to exist, in six months, after which the home government prohibited its renewal.

In the meantime, the charges of violence, etc., against the planters, had been examined by a commission appointed for the purpose, and were found to be utterly baseless: not one of them was sustained. And what is more, they were all old stories, which had been refuted again and again, some of them so far back as fifty years ago. No doubt the planters have, from time to time, taken the law into their own hands; but it has been generally for their own protection that they have done so, and in the absence of the protection which the government should have supplied. It is not denied, by their warmest supporters—that is to say, themselves—that there have been black sheep among them, and that their manners have not always had that repose which stamps the caste of the *Vere de Veres* of the civil service. They may have bullied, and even beaten a native, now and then; but conduct of the kind is rare in the present day; and it is the merest affectation and hypocrisy to pretend that any one class of Englishmen in India offends more in this respect than another. You may meet with members of the civil service who do not scruple to cuff or kick their servants when displeased with them, and military officers are certainly not free from a similar reproach. Of the non-official class, no larger proportion ill-treat their domestics, or the natives generally, than of any other class. But as regards our countrymen generally,

the tales told of their cruelty to the natives have been generally brought away from India by chance travellers, who very seldom speak from personal experience, and who are liable to be imposed upon by wicked wags, who seek to mystify them as the cabman did Mr. Pickwick, upon the sight of the immortal note-book. Across any mess-table in India, may be heard stories of how Slyman of the civil service, "sold" a distinguished traveller in 1858, by pretending to sign death warrants without reading them, merely scrawling his initials, and throwing them over his shoulder, to the extent of a hundred and fifty in half an hour or so. Also, how Rampant, of the Irregulars, told another distinguished traveller that wonderful story of the ensign picketing his syce by the heels in the place of the horse, and then and there administering a thrashing which would have been too severe for that quadruped, and which nearly killed the syce. This incident had no existence except in the inventive brain of the narrator, but it has gone forth to the world as truth, and has assisted not a little in spreading a very mischievous delusion. Of course the fault in such a case mainly lies with the person who commits the deception, which is one of those funny ideas that may be carried a great deal too far. But still it must be admitted that some travellers have been a little too eager to receive stories of the kind, and natives are very apt to tell a *burra sahib* that which they consider he wishes to hear.

The indigo planters, it may be easily supposed, have received more than their share of the abuse which has been so liberally bestowed upon our countrymen in general for their alleged brutality to the natives; and this has been owing not only to official prejudice and

official misrepresentation, but to the enmity of the native zemindars (or landholders) who find in their European neighbours formidable rivals, owing to their superior skill and industry, and whom it is their object therefore to drive out of the field. It is through the depredations of these men upon their property, indeed, that the Europeans have been betrayed from time to time into those acts of violence which have given a colouring to the accusations against them. These native zemindars are themselves really the oppressors that they represent the Europeans to be. Their violence and extortion are beyond all bounds, and the fairness and moderation of their neighbours in money matters spoils the market for them, as they make a point themselves of exacting ruinous interest for their loans, and "selling up" without mercy the unfortunate ryot who is unable to pay.

It is this unhappy state of things, and the bitter hostility which has been the consequence, between the non-official Europeans on the one side, and the natives and certain official authorities on the other, in Bengal, that are at present retarding the progress of European settlement throughout India; and this at a time when the failing cotton supply from America has created the necessity for a new field for this important branch of our commerce, and when India has been declared by the most competent authorities to be the best field for the purpose. If that branch of our commerce could now be transferred to India, the misfortunes of our cousins across the Atlantic might indeed be turned to account, and the ill-wind in America might be made to blow incalculable good, not only to this country but throughout our Empire in the East.

In no quarter is this fact more fully appreciated than in those high places where the policy of the nation goes



through a process of manufacture from the raw material of public opinion, and is issued thence in as inoffensive thunderbolts as may be. In the Olympus of office, in fact, it is the declared policy that Europeans shall be encouraged in every practicable manner to turn their attention to India, with a view of settling in that country. The Home government and the Indian government are united upon the point. Both fully see the folly of maintaining the country merely as a camp which may be set in a blaze whenever a sentry happens to fall asleep; and out of which the English might be turned at any time, as the popular sarcasm says, without leaving any more useful remains of their rule than their empty beer bottles!

The events of 1857 sufficed to remove most of the cobwebs of prejudice, even from old gentlemen whose minds had been "laid down" for a long time—say "since classic Canning died"—in inaction. But they left some bold spirits, who, even though convinced, would not confess the fact, and who are still fighting manfully—and as openly as they dare to do—in the old cause of exclusion, of secrecy, of sham. The natives, when left to themselves, always get on wonderfully well with the non-official class of Europeans, and wherever these are settled, there the natives are most prosperous and most content. The officials in the North-West, in certain reports which have been called for on the subject, declare the planters in those parts to be a real blessing to their several districts, through the employment that they create, and the security that they maintain. There is no reason why they should not be the same in Bengal, if they be only permitted. Before the present opposition to them was got up—through the acts of servants of government—the planters in Bengal were as popular

as could be desired. Had they been otherwise they would surely have been disposed of during the mutinies, when all authority was suspended over the greater part of the provinces, and they were left at the mercy of the native population. But instead of coming to any harm in those troublous times, they were undisturbed in many cases, and in others managed to hold their own, and keep their districts in order, even after the authorities had fled; and there is no instance of a planter losing his life during the rebellion except when in arms fighting for the government. These facts cannot be controverted, and they are in themselves a conclusive proof of the falsehood of the aspersions which have been cast upon this class of our countrymen in Bengal. But the truth is that a great deal of nonsense has been talked and written for a long time past about the "mild Hindoo," and the "civilized and enlightened Mussulman." Both classes have been described by enthusiasts, who I am afraid have not been actuated entirely by love, as wofully oppressed by the "independent Europeans," while the civil servants have professed to be their protectors, standing between them and the brutal violence of the dominant race. The civil service accused the independent body of wishing to govern "India for the English," and the opposition cry that they set up was "India for the Indians," which sounded fair enough, and was well calculated to find favour at home. But the independent body retorted with "India for the Civil Service," which they declared to be the real meaning of the "India for the Indians" cry; and I am afraid that the sarcasm was not quite unjust. It was certainly a great piece of policy on the part of the civilians to link their cause to that of the natives; especially as, owing to the amount of patronage in their hands, they were in so excellent a position to

induce the natives to back them up. The North-West men would not have taken the bait so easily, and there would have been still less chance with the natives of Oudh or the Punjaub. But the cringing servility of the Bengalee was just adapted to lend itself to the device. Ask a Bengalee how many miles it is to such and such a place, or what o'clock it is, and he is quite capable of answering that it is as many miles, or hours, as "the master" pleases. The master's "pleasure" is appealed to in cases quite as much beyond his control; accordingly the divinity that hedges any servant of government is immense, and if a man in high authority he is absolute master of the consciences of his native subordinates. His known dislike to any particular class of his countrymen would be quite sufficient to excite most active opposition to that class; and swearing through thick and thin against them, quite irrespective of the truth, is no difficult matter among a people who look upon perjury as a light and venial offence. The ingenious Mr. Codlin, in Mr. Dickens' tale, adopted the exact civil service policy when he desired to ingratiate himself with Little Nell. "Codlin's the friend, not Short," say the civilians; and the natives, believing it their interest to echo the cry, echo it accordingly. And so it is that Short, having had quite enough to do in looking after his own affairs, has always been misrepresented, and continues to be misrepresented up to the present time.

Yet it will be found that it was only through the intercourse of independent Englishmen with India, and the attention which they drew to them, that the great abuses of our administration have been corrected. In the hey-day of the Company's rule, suttee and infanticide were "manners and customs of the natives" that it was not considered necessary to repress, until Indian travel-

lers had aroused public indignation by exposing the impunity with which those horrible rites were practised. The employment of torture for the collection of the revenue—which has always been part of the native system, and has been resorted to habitually by the native subordinates of the government—was exposed and denounced by independent Europeans before the government consented to recognize a fact of which they must have been cognisant if they had any official eyes and ears. How long India would have been without those material improvements which are now being urged on with such alacrity, but for the employment of a similar pressure, one can scarcely venture to surmise. But if the old system had been left to itself, it may safely be supposed that not a single railway would at the present time be even projected in any part of the country ; that there would be no irrigation except such as is supplied by nature ; and that even such primitive improvements as roads would not have been developed as they are. Independent Europeans have surely, then, done something in the way of good for India ; and what ground there is for supposing that they would do harm in larger numbers I really cannot conceive. Yet it is plain that the prejudice against them has not been conquered by the home government, notwithstanding the strong opinion expressed in their favour by Lord Canning, who, whatever his past errors, has of late displayed most of the qualities of an enlightened ruler. His lordship, like all unprejudiced men before him, has seen through the absurdity of the theory that the climate is a prohibition to European settlement. Were such the case it is obvious that the question would settle itself, and that there would be no occasion for any opposition in the matter. The climate is a difficulty certainly, but one

which it does not require a covenant to overcome. If one man can live in it another man can live in it, under similar conditions. Nobody pretends that India can be treated exactly like a colony, and that labouring men can emigrate thereto with any chance of competing with the native population, even if such competition were desirable. But whenever a man can obtain a position in which he can use his head to direct the labour of native hands, he may settle in the country not only for his own, but the country's good. India teems with resources which only require development to render her the richest country on earth. She has a population amply sufficient to develop them; but a large portion of her labouring classes are either in part or wholly unemployed for want of a direction being given to their energies. Native capital and native skill are insufficient for the purpose; British enterprise and British industry are imperatively required. In the plains of India, and on the slopes of the Himalayas, there is land extending over an area larger than that of England, now in jungle, and requiring nothing but these aids to be brought under cultivation. The native population, so far from being insufficient for the purpose, is already too large, as I have said, to obtain employment; and thousands of labourers are now allowed to proceed to the West Indies, the Mauritius, and Ceylon, as the only alternative from starvation. And yet, even for the growth of the commonest necessities of life, the cultivation of this land would certainly *pay*; for the price of food all through the country was scarcely ever so high as it is at present.

A great impetus has been given of late years to the production of tea, for which the neighbourhood of the Himalayas is admirably adapted: and cotton might be

grown to an unlimited extent, were adequate encouragement given to the settler. Hitherto every Indian administration, with the exception of that of Lord William Bentick, has been against him. He has always been subject to deportation, black acts, arms acts, or the gagging of the press. As far as his political condition is concerned, it must be admitted that his troubles are likely to be few. The measures of Indian reform passed last session are as large a stride in the right direction as government can be expected to make at one time ; and their faults and requirements may be easily remedied and supplied. That his social condition will be improved under a better political system may be considered a natural consequence. The main reason why Anglo-Indians are misunderstood in this country is, as I have said, because by their jealousies and dissensions they have conveyed a false impression of themselves. And the cause of their jealousies and dissensions is that there has never been a sufficient variety of classes in India to form a properly balanced state of society. The Indian services have provided some of the greatest men of which our annals can boast ; but their greatness has been in spite of, and not a consequence of, the conditions under which they have lived. A mind of a high order will frequently develope all the more surely in solitude—whether that solitude be imposed by necessity or accepted by choice, as a refuge from dull and perhaps vulgar companionship. But on the other hand many minds of not inferior *calibre* will be lowered by such an ordeal, if they be not crushed altogether. As for that class of minds which depend upon circumstance and opportunity for their development, they are not likely to derive much benefit in the ordinary course of Indian affairs. Here and there may be found opportunities

for distinction in the civil service and on the staff; but these seldom occur except in troublous times, and it is to be hoped that troublous times are past, even though some ardent spirits should love their chance of distinction under a happier state of things. Nothing narrows a man's mind more than exclusive association with persons of his own pursuits. Everything is measured by a professional standard. The great objects of life too frequently become secondary in importance to such questions as, What is the proper allowance of an acting commissioner on leave? or, Who is to get the interpretership, for which nobody in the regiment can manage to pass? The effects of this monotonous state of existence would not unnaturally tend to the formation of profligates and prigs, and popular belief declares that both are largely represented in the Indian services. Popular belief is, as usual, too hasty in coming to this decision, for Indians as a body are neither more immoral nor more pedantic than any other class of men, while in many respects they are superior to most educated classes at home. There is an immense deal of warmth and cordiality in Indian society, and our countrymen in the East present a favourable contrast in point of hospitality to their brethren in the West. But it must be confessed that the amount of "shop" talked, even in the most refined circles, is frightfully depressing, not only to the "outsider" but to those who may be called members of "the firm." It is the limited world of intercourse to which the Anglo-Indian is usually restricted, and the low mental tone that it too frequently induces, which are at the bottom of the difficulties with which India has at present to contend. Independent settlers are still "strangers" in the country, and even lately have been officially so described by the Lieutenant Governor of

Bengal. It is the feeling of resentment on the part of certain officials of the old *régime* at the intrusion of the stranger among them, that is the main cause of the animosities at present agitating Calcutta. Political rivalry leads to social rivalry, and *vice versa*; and between the two a state of things has been produced which could not well be worse. The independent Europeans are systematically attacked by a large class of the natives, aided and abetted, it is now too manifest, by certain high officials. Of course the Europeans do not submit to attacks without taking the privilege of reply; and the effect of the contest threatens to be such as to render government impossible. I am afraid that besides official jealousy the evil must be ascribed somewhat to the promiscuous "petting" of the natives, which has been for too long the policy of the officials in Bengal. It was this same petting which caused the military class to break out into mutiny. Unless there is prompt interference on the part of the supreme government, properly backed at home, we shall see a similar rising among the baboos—not a murderous movement in itself, but one of slander and passive resistance scarcely less dangerous to our rule. To check the growing disease it is absolutely necessary that the British power should assert its position, and make the cause of its meanest subject its own. We want no domination of the white over the black. Simple equality, which is the principle professed by the government, is all that our countrymen demand. At present they are placed in a greatly inferior position, and the practical policy pursued is one which has been coarsely but correctly described as "buttering the black and snubbing the Saxon."

Since the above pages were written several concessions in favour of settlers have been made by the Indian



government. Any man may now buy waste land, if he has but the money, and hold it in fee-simple ; and landholders may redeem the land-tax, if it so pleases them, at twenty years' purchase.

Other reforms are coming, and with them, there is every reason to believe, "a good time" for the English in India.

## VIII.

### FAMINE IN INDIA.

THE subject is a sad one, but I am fortunately enabled to take a cheerful view of it, and promise not to inflict upon the reader any purposeless pain. I can assure even that particularly uncomfortable person, known as "the most delicate female," that she may peruse these pages without danger of having her feelings "harrowed up" by any unpleasant details of suffering such as nature, in a coarse and vulgar way, will make occasionally manifest. My object, indeed, is not to describe what Indian famines are, but what they might be made ; for a very good authority has come to the conclusion that they are by no means so inevitable as is generally supposed, and that there are means by which they may in a great measure be "put down."

Of course famines may be put down by the rude expedient of feeding the people ; but I do not intend to propose any such preposterous remedy. It would be preposterous to feed people by charitable contributions, if we could at a less cost enable them to feed themselves, without any charity at all. Prevention is always better than cure, and in a case where prevention may be made nearly perfect, and cure can be effected only to a very

small extent, the former is preferable in an even greater degree. It is the latter process that has been tried in the north-west provinces during the famine with which they were desolated last year. The efforts which have been made to mitigate the horrors of the crisis reflect honour upon all concerned. The Indian government and the public, both Indian and English, contributed gallantly to the good work; but they could not prevent many thousands of persons from dying of starvation, although they certainly saved many thousands more. Had the question been merely one of money, the means might have been found to procure subsistence for all the sufferers. But the difficulty was to get at them. The entire population could not be brought into the large towns and stations to receive food, even had sufficient been forthcoming for the number. It was necessary to go to the persons requiring relief, and to convey the food to them. As it is impossible even for government officials to be everywhere at once, and as hunger will not wait, the difficulties attendant upon the work may be conceived. These were moreover aggravated by absence of means of communication, caused by the want of roads and conveyance. The cure was thus necessarily imperfect. How far the recurrence of the evil can be prevented it is most desirable to examine; and for this purpose we cannot do better than follow the facts set forth by Colonel Baird Smith in his report upon the subject, presented to the Indian government.

There are several questions connected with the occurrence of famines in India. The system of irrigation has naturally a great deal to do with their force, if not their frequency, as famine in most cases arises from drought. The system of internal communication has also not a little

relation to the subject, for reasons already alluded to. But the most important question in connexion with it, is the land revenue settlement—the terms upon which the land is held and the adjustment of the government demand upon it. This lies, we are told, far nearer to the root of the matter, because of its intimate and vital relation to the every-day life of the people, and their growth towards prosperity or towards degradation, than any such accessories as canals or roads, however important both of these may be. In order that the reader may test the truth of this assertion we will make a dive into the colonel's statistics of the famines which have taken place during a period of more than a hundred years past. From 1733 to 1861, it appears that there were thirteen droughts, causing a greater or less degree of scarcity. These happened at intervals varying from four to twenty-four years, which is a not unimportant fact, as it disposes of a popular theory that such calamities are of regular periodical recurrence, to be accepted as matters of course. Of the thirteen visitations the most destructive were those of six seasons between and including those of 1770 and 1861. These occurred with a greater approach to regularity, that is to say, the intervals between them varied from thirteen to twenty-four years; but even this difference is sufficient to show that the idea of their periodical recurrence is a delusion. Of these six great famines, that of 1770 was the greatest of all. It is believed to have been the most severe that has ever fallen upon India. It is worthy of remark, by the way, that this famine although included among the droughts, is declared by the natives to have resulted from an exactly contrary cause—an excess of rain, which caused inundation, and washed away the crops. But one of the worst of these visitations was that of 1837-38

when it is considered probable that no less than eight hundred thousand persons perished of starvation. It is with the famine of this period that Colonel Smith compares that of 1860-61, and it is from the result of that comparison that I am enabled to draw the cheering conclusions at which I have arrived. The two areas which he has compared are much the same in extent, and it appears that other things were equal enough during the two periods to warrant the anticipation of similar effects from similar causes. But although the conditions during the former period were in almost every respect more favourable, the mortality was far greater, and the amount of general suffering must have been immensely in excess of that of 1860-61. Food during that former period was at an average price, in the worst localities, of twelve and a half seers for a rupee, or twenty-five pounds for two shillings, according to English computation; while in the worst localities in the latter period the same sum of money purchased only from seventeen to nineteen pounds. This is the surest indication that the former famine was not so great in its pressure as the latter, and yet its victims were far more numerous! In the former period too, there were signs of disorganization of society such as have had no existence in the latter. Every exertion was made in 1837-38 to alleviate the general distress, as in 1860-61. Many thousands of persons were employed upon extraordinary public works, and the government remitted a large amount of revenue, while private subscriptions were raised to a considerable extent. But, notwithstanding every exertion, it was found impossible in many parts to preserve order. Driven to desperation by starvation, large bodies of the population gathered into bands for plunder, attacking the grain stores, and carrying off their

contents. Disorganization, indeed, threatened to become general, and could only be repressed by force. Troops had to be employed upon some occasions, and during the whole period of the famine it was found necessary to maintain a largely augmented body of police, both horse and foot. Of such disorganization as this, Colonel Smith tells us, there has been no sign during the famine of 1860-61, nor has the amount of revenue remitted been anything comparable. It is evident that during the intervening period society had, by some means, been strengthened, and had become better able to resist the effects of the scourge. Of this there is abundant proof in the improved condition of the smaller proprietors. In 1837-38 they suffered in common with the humblest tillers of the soil. Landlords as well as labourers perished of starvation, or were reduced to pauperism along with them. And this, notwithstanding that they still held their lands. But these lands were useless to their owners unless the owners could keep them in cultivation. They could not sell them, for nobody would buy them. They could not mortgage them, for nobody would lend money upon them. The average selling price in 1837 was at one year's rent, or about a third more than the amount of the government demand on the total area sold. This was the rate when sales could be effected at all; but it may easily be supposed that in time of distress they would be generally out of the question. And this state of things was owing not so much to any unbearable pressure of taxation, although that was bad enough, as to the uncertainty of the tenure, and the knowledge that it was in the power of government to increase the demand from time to time, and to throw any burden upon the soil that it pleased.

In 1860-61, notwithstanding that food was higher, and the general conditions less favourable, the mortality was far less; there was no social disorganization, and the small proprietors generally managed to tide over their difficulties. Land, which, as we have seen, in the former period was worth only a third more than the government demand upon it, had in the latter period risen to five times the revenue, which is its present rate. The total amount of the land revenue in 1837-39, in those parts of the north-west and Delhi territory under long settlements was, in round numbers, three and a half millions sterling; the value of the land was somewhat more than four and a half millions. In the succeeding twenty-four years the value of the land having risen to five times the amount of the former public demand, or to seventeen and a half millions; the wealth of the landowners is shown to be augmented by no less a sum than thirteen millions.

The direct cause of this happy change is undoubtedly the improved system of land revenue settlement in operation since the famine of 1837-38, or rather the successful working of a system which had then but recently been enacted. When the north-west provinces first came under British rule, Lord Wellesley promised that the Permanent Settlement, as introduced by Lord Cornwallis into Bengal, should be extended to them. This Permanent Settlement has its friends and its enemies, like most other things. It was granted by Lord Cornwallis with the object of raising the position of the cultivators by the encouragement—or, we may almost say, the creation—of an upper class, who should be responsible to the government for the revenue, which revenue being assessed at a certain rate in perpetuity, would give the proprietor the benefit of all improvements.

and through him, it was hoped, benefit the cultivator in a proportionate degree. Nothing appears more fair than such an arrangement. It was certainly a most liberal one on the part of the government; but though considered by many to involve an unnecessary sacrifice of state interests, it has proved successful in its working, and the government have no reason to object to it, though it has been found generally distasteful to the subordinate official mind. The great objection urged to it is, that it has,—by conferring too sweepingly upon the zemindars, whose original status was that of farmers of the land revenue, the position and powers of owners of the soil—done injustice in some cases to other claims, and that, in fact, the wrong man was not unfrequently put into the wrong place; and further, that while the settlement has benefited both the government and the proprietors, it has not been equally favourable to the peasantry, whom it has tended to depress.

That there is some truth in these objections cannot be denied; but the defects pointed out are accidental, and not a necessary part of the system. As far as the invasion of individual rights is concerned, the errors were those of ignorance, haste, and want of proper precautions, and these are errors which need never occur again. The depression of the peasantry was certainly very great for a time, and up to 1830, when Rammohun Roy made a representation on their behalf in England, their condition must have been very bad indeed. But that it has materially improved since then there can be no doubt; and so wretched a state of things would never have existed at all had the government not consented to remove the restriction by which the zemindars were at first prevented from ejecting any ryot who paid the then existing amount of rent. It would be a diffi-



cult matter, undoubtedly, to maintain a subordinate permanent settlement between landlord and tenant; but means might surely be found to protect the latter from tyrannical exactions without forfeiting the advantages of the system. And this, too, must be admitted—that whatever was the condition of the Bengal peasant five-and-twenty years ago, under the Perpetual Settlement, it was better than that of the Madras peasant under the ryotwar system—the rival scheme of Sir Thomas Munro; and whereas the condition of the Bengal peasant has been improving since that period, the condition of the Madras peasant remains as bad as ever. Sir Thomas Munro's scheme was founded upon exactly opposite principles to that of Lord Cornwallis. Its main object was to abolish all intervention between the government which collected the revenue and the people who paid it. The functions of the zemindars were swept away. Every peasant was to have his field measured and assessed, and to pay his tax direct to the state, the amount, as in Bengal, to be fixed in perpetuity. Nothing seemed more just than such an arrangement. There was only one objection to it. It would not work without gross invasion of private rights; but it has endured in the greater portion of the Madras presidency to this day, with some modifications, the principles of which is the substitution of an annual for the permanent settlement originally intended, while annual settlement is of course considered a tax upon improvement, and works accordingly. As far as oppression and corruption is concerned, things are doubtless not so bad as they were; but Sir Thomas Munro soon discovered that the native subordinates, whom it was found necessary to employ in the elaborate machinery of the system, abused their powers in the grossest manner, to an extent, indeed.

which would not have been possible under a zemindaree settlement.

It was the ryotwar system of Madras, combined with a system of village leases, that was first introduced into the north-west provinces. Lord Wellesley, as we have said, promised a permanent settlement as in Bengal, but this was disallowed by the home authorities. The other plan was adopted by a regulation of 1822; but it was found too elaborate to be carried out, and by a regulation of 1833 the present settlement of the north-west provinces was enacted. This was not completed until 1842, twenty years after it was first designed, the principle being the same as that of the scheme first introduced. The settlement, however, besides being made with communities or their representatives instead of with every individual peasant, has the advantage of being for thirty years instead of for one. It was originally intended to be for twenty, but it was considered advisable to make the extension. The result has been an amount of prosperity and confidence such as was not expected by anybody but the immediate promoters of the measure, who expected a great deal more. And it is to its successful operation that the comparatively mild effects of the famine must be mainly ascribed. Colonel Smith, in his report, bears undeniable testimony to the fact that, foremost among the means by which society in Northern India has been strengthened, so as to resist with far less suffering far heavier pressure from drought and famine in 1860-61 than in 1837-38, is the creation of a vast mass of readily convertible and easily transferable agricultural property, which is the direct result of the limitation for long terms of the government demand on the land, and the careful record of individual rights accompanying it, which have been in full

and active operation since the existing settlements were made.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that, although the last famine has not been so destructive in its effects as the former one, the amount of destruction has been deplorable indeed. Colonel Smith does not venture to estimate the sum total of the mortality ; but we may gain some idea of it when we hear that it is not nearly so great as in 1837-38, when the number of deaths were estimated at eight hundred thousand. Are we to understand that it may have been anything like half that number? In any case, it is clear that if there are means to be found to avert such horrors for the future, it is our duty to find them. A complete system of canals and roads would work wonders towards the object, and this may now be considered in progress. But there is more to be done still ; and the excellent working of the long settlement leads us to the necessary conclusion, as Colonel Smith recommends, that it should be made longer, and be extended, in part, in perpetuity, like that of Bengal. I have glanced at the objections made to that settlement, and repeat my conviction that whatever faults attach to it are not part of the system. We have nothing to do in these days with any original invasion of private rights ; these evils are beyond remedy, but need not of course be repeated ; while, as regards the condition of the peasants, we shall soon have ample protection for them in proper courts, and, it is to be hoped, in an improved police. Nor is there any real sacrifice involved on the part of the government. The right to increase the land revenue is sacrificed, it is true ; but that right is one which can never be exercised without exciting discontent, and perhaps disaffection, while the mere knowledge that the right is reserved is

alone sufficient to destroy confidence and prevent prosperity. Even under the thirty years' settlement in those parts of the north-west provinces and Delhi territory under notice, there are at the present time nearly eight million acres of culturable but uncultivated land, being equal to one-third part of the whole present cultivation, and to about one-sixth part of its total area. Since the existing settlement has been in operation, one million acres of new land have been brought into cultivation; it may be therefore supposed that a settlement in perpetuity would speedily increase that amount—eventually, perhaps, to the full extent of the culturable area; in which case, not only would the proprietors of the soil have gained proportionably in profits, but they would have lightened the burden of the state demand by not less than eight hundred thousand pounds per annum. This is Colonel Smith's calculation, and may be accepted as trustworthy. The colonel might have added that, with honest courts to protect them, and a respectable police to preserve order, the condition of the peasantry could not fail to be improved by augmented cultivation, as it has been to a great degree in Bengal without either of these aids; while, as far as government interests are concerned, it must be a ruling power rather hard to please which would not consider itself to be a gainer, both financially and politically, by the spread of prosperity and contentment.

The report to which I have referred touches upon another topic intimately connected with the subject of famines—the redemption of the land-tax by a capital payment, a measure strongly advocated by the writer, and since conceded by the government. This, as well as the sale of waste lands in fee-simple, which is a companion measure, indicates that our rulers have entirely

thrown over their former restricted policy, and are prepared to join earnestly in the cause of the regeneration of India. The government waste lands may now be bought by anybody who has the money to pay for them, at ten shillings an acre for cleared, and five shillings an acre for jungle land. The land-tax may be redeemed by anybody who desires to redeem it, at twenty years' purchase, which, considering that money is worth ten per cent. in India, is no such bad bargain. The natives, it is said, will not avail themselves of it, at any rate for the present : in the first place, because they are never prone to part with capital except for some very strong reason ; and, in the second place, because they do not believe in the stability of our rule ; but the Europeans will, and will by these means, implant themselves permanently on the soil, where they cannot fail eventually to get the upper hand. In the north-west the permanent settlement is still wanting, but there can be little question of its being granted very speedily, not in every part of the provinces at once, but first, as recommended by Colonel Smith, in all those parts of the country not under the influence of canals executed at the exclusive cost of government, where prolonged settlements have previously existed, and where there is reason to suppose that those settlements are fair and equitable, doubtful settlements to be set right as soon as possible, and brought under the same law ; those parts where expense has been incurred on account of canals being allowed to remain under present conditions, until the water-rate can also be settled in perpetuity. Under some arrangement of this kind, with a complete system of irrigation and internal communication, such as we now find suggested, it is scarcely too much to say that droughts would be impossible to any great extent, and

famines, whether arising from these or any other causes, would be so easily met as to be deprived of all their horrible features—becoming, in fact, a mere question of expense which the local community could be generally relied upon to meet. But it is highly desirable that, in any change of the kind, encouragement should be given to the creation of an upper class, as in Bengal, which, besides being a bulwark for the peasantry in case of distress, shall be a bulwark for the government in case of disaffection. Whatever argument was wanting in favour of the superior wisdom of this policy, is supplied by the events of 1857, which left our authority in the greater part of Bengal absolutely untouched, while in the north-west, where the aristocracy had been broken down by our revenue system, the government collapsed at the first shock. It would be a glorious triumph, indeed, if we could cure the double evil by the same enlightened means, and kill two such birds of prey as Famine and Rebellion with one liberal stone!

I promised to take a cheerful view of a sad subject; but it is with mournful feelings that I must conclude after all. Colonel Baird Smith, while the above lines were being penned, was dying on board ship. He was on his way home, broken down in health by labours from which relief came too late. The famine report which gained for all India a fee-simple tenure of land, and will gain for the north-west provinces a perpetual settlement, gained nothing for its author but a grave at Madras. His constitution, already weakened by a wound received at the siege of Delhi, where he conducted the engineering operations, finally succumbed to the exposure which he incurred during the last rainy season, while engaged upon his last and not least important work. Colonel Baird Smith belonged to the best type of the old

“company’s officer.” He was a soldier, a scientific man, and was possessed of literary talents and attainments in no ordinary degree. He was allied, too, to literature in another sense, for he was the son-in-law of Thomas de Quincey. He died in middle life, but his public career had extended over a quarter of a century of almost continual labour and usefulness.

## IX.

### THE SIMPKINS IN INDIA.

A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY TO THEIR  
FRIENDS AT HOME.

#### 1.

#### *Introduction.*

THE editor has but a few words to say with regard to the letters which he is about to introduce to the public. Some short time back, a gentleman, named Peter Simpkin, who had been engaged in the wine trade in Crutched-Friars, found himself, after thirty-five years of business, in a position to retire with a modest fortune of some twenty-six thousand pounds. [It may have been a little more, but that is the figure we have usually heard mentioned.] As he still felt himself full of energy, both mental and corporeal, and had, moreover, a family to provide for, he looked about him for an investment.

At this juncture, he made the acquaintance of a gallant officer of the (late) East India Company's Service, who was then in England for the benefit of his health, and who, having originally met Mr. Clarence Simpkin,



our worthy wine-merchant's eldest child, at a billiard and chess divan, of which they were both supporters, shortly became very intimate in the elegant villa at Brixton, where our friends were domiciled. This officer, Lieutenant (or as he was usually termed, Captain) Ardent, was a handsome young man, possessed of a persuasive eloquence, and varied stores of information, relating, it appears, chiefly to British India, and the development of its resources. Not only had he been a frequent contributor to the columns of that well-known Indian print, "The European British Subject" (his writing in which he believes to have greatly contributed to the fall of the Court of Directors), but he had, as we are informed, spent much of his time in travelling in various of the Hill-Districts; and indeed it was a melancholy proof of his sharing in that weakness of health which is the not uncommon concomitant of genius, that in his ten years of service he had only been fifteen months with his regiment, from first to last. It was, however, a fortunate result of this enforced absence from his more strictly professional duties, that he had been enabled, as above hinted, to study the hill-tracts of our eastern possessions, and had been struck with their capabilities for producing flax, hemp, tea, coffee, sugar, milk, potatoes, and other useful elements of human happiness. The fruits of these observations he was by no means loath to impart to his friends, especially to that class of them who possessed that one advantage of money, the absence of which curtailed the exercise of his own numerous gifts. Mr. Simpkin—in the situation in which we have already described him—was naturally much struck with such representations, and the ultimate resolution which he formed of taking his family to India, and investing his savings in agricultural opera-

tions in that country, was, in all probability, owing to Captain Ardent's statements. It is even said that the latter gentleman handsomely offered to undertake the above journey and investment in person, leaving to his friend the more agreeable functions of continuing to reside in the London of his earlier affections, and of drawing those periodical dividends which he confidently expected. But whether from the adventurous spirit often characteristic of the true London citizen, or from the cautious habits induced by a long and not unsuccessful business-career, or whether from an union of the two, certain it is that, while thanking the captain warmly for his liberal proposal, he adopted the resolution of conducting the interesting enterprise in person.

Of Mr. S.'s family casual mention has been made. Clarence Simpkin was a favorable specimen of "Young London," and the elegance of his costume and manners was the envy of the male members of his acquaintance, while it commanded the admiration of the softer sex. And this reminds us that we have neglected to describe the ladies of Mr. S.'s genteel household; a task, in truth, for which we feel ourselves all unfit. Suffice it, then, to say that Mrs. Simpkin was connected with some of the first civic families, her mother being the niece of a well-known alderman, who had been on one occasion all but elected to the dignified post of Lord Mayor of London. A proper spirit of self-respect, therefore, justly characterised her bearing; though the general feelings of the British matron never failed to show themselves when duly evoked. To the enumeration of the personal and other graces of Miss H  loise Simpkin, the pen feels its utter inadequacy. Educated, regardless of expence, first at Islington, and subsequently at a first-class finishing establishment at Hammersmith, it

will be at once understood that she possessed attractions of no common order, But it was not only upon the beauties of her person that the gazer loved to dwell, though a pair of bright eyes, and hair dressed à l'*Empératrice*, do go a great way in fixing the attention. Her figure might be of the kind described by that ribald but poetic peer, Lord Byron, as "dumpy," but her mental qualities were decidedly—in American parlance—"tall;" so much so, that her mother looked up to her as an authority in all matters relating to the polite world. It remains to state only that Mary-Jane Patten, the parlor, house, and ladies' maid of the family, insisted on following their fortunes; Captain Ardent having dissuaded them from taking Mr. John, the liveried henchman, to whose services their position in life had hitherto entitled them, on the (alleged) score that he would be sure to leave them for a situation in the service of government, almost as soon as he set foot in the country.

Accordingly the Simpkins (it is a curious coincidence, considering the former business of the head of the family, that their name is identical with the native pronunciation of the word Champagne) embarked for India in one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam fleet (carrying an experienced surgeon and cow), and reached Calcutta, after a passage overland, which appears to have been marked with not more than the usual number of flirtations and quarrels, and in which Mr. Clarence was saved from having to fight a duel, and Miss Hèloise from marrying an ensign of foot, by the fact of that officer (the hero of both engagements) having been landed dead-drunk at Madras. The subsequent extracts from their correspondence will developé their surprising adventures.

## 2.

*From Miss Héloïse Simpkin, Mrs. ———'s Boarding House, Calcutta, to Miss Juliana Myrtle, Baker Street, Portman Square, London.*

MY DEAREST JULIANA—I am so dazzled and delighted with the charming new world around me, that I can scarcely find patience even for so delightful a task as writing to my fondest of friends. You, who, since we first met at that odious Miss Backboard's, at Hammer-smith, have been the only being to whom I ever confided the secrets of my heart, or would lend the patterns of my milliner. And now, dear, since I have taken courage to commence, I find I have so much to tell you, that I fear I shall leave nearly everything unsaid, or postpone the letter altogether till next mail day. But however, I will try and compose myself to the composition.

A great many people think that the best part of India is the voyage out—which is not India, of course, or at least not all of it—and I am not sure that they are not quite right. I must say I never enjoyed myself so much—that is to say, as soon as that dreadful *maladie du mer* would allow me to enjoy anything at all. We had a very nice ship on both sides—of the Isthmus, you know—and such nice passengers, except some wretched people who were going to Australia, to seek their fortunes, or something of that kind, and of whom nobody took much notice. We had very fine weather the first part of the overland journey—which is nearly all water, by-the-bye—at least they said it was fine. For my part, I should be very sorry to see bad weather if that was the case. Judge of my wretched

condition when I tell you that I was not able to leave my cabin until we got to within sight of Malta. I forgot to tell you, by the way, that we came through *La Belle France*, crossing to which always made one ill, of course, but then it was for so short a time that I never cared about it. I like travelling in France—especially by the railway, where all the guards and other attendants are military men, and ask you for your ticket in such a polite manner. We came part of the way by steamer along the Saone, which was a picturesque arrangement, but too cold to be enjoyed—this was in December, as you know—and I fear that I must have looked a dreadful fright all the way. I know poor mamma did, and so did papa and Adolphus, only both smoked, and didn't mind it. Malta is a sweet place, full of military men and dark-eyed beauties in mantillas, like the Spanish ladies one reads of, only they use the roofs of houses for balconies, and have not any bull-fights that I know of, nor did I hear any serenades, though that may be because I was only there in the day time. It was after we left Malta that I first *learned* the passengers. I was fortunately able to appear at breakfast the next morning. I should tell you that I shared a cabin with three other young ladies, except that one was rather old. We were a merry party when we were not ill, though we were very much in each other's way, and it was no easy matter to accomplish a satisfactory toilette. We had to do one another's hair and hook one another's dresses, and the manner in which one's things got mixed was dreadful. We could only get through our toilettes one at a time, owing to the frightfully confined space. The elder lady, who was of the *old-young* description, always remained till the last, and seemed to like it, and must have enjoyed her comparative freedom

immensely, for she had always a beautiful colour when she came into breakfast. She was going out to be married to a very young gentleman—just posted as an ensign—and she had been married before—some people said two or three times. My other two companions were very nice, and quite in my style. One was engaged to be married to a gentlemen whom they said she had never seen, but I fancy that she must have done so, for she told me in confidence that she did not like him. The third was merely coming out to join her friends. She was reported to have money of her own. At Malta somebody told me she had five thousand pounds, but by the time we reached Alexandria it had increased (in popular report) to ten; at Cairo it had augmented to thirty, and during the journey across the desert it was raised to fifty. She fortunately left us at Galle, otherwise she would have become a millionaire, and the attentions of all the gentlemen to her would have been more odious and insufferable than they were as it was.

But I am getting on too fast. They were both very nice girls, as I have said, and were provided with beautiful outfits. We used to show each other our dresses on the days when we were allowed to have our boxes up from the hold, and as these two days in the week happened to be the same as those on which the captain provided champagne at dinner, all the ladies were in fresher toilettes and much more lively than on the other days. One lady we noticed, who was said to have married four majors in the course of her chequered career (why are majors always so exceedingly marriageable?) and to have made the overland trip seven times, never came out to dinner except on those two days, which a very political gentleman on board, who had

come out from Manchester to put cotton on a different basis—which I dare say would be a very good thing, though even then it would never be so nice as lawn or muslin—said was making “an invidious distinction”—he called it “hinvidious” by the way, as dear mamma used to do before I left school and laughed her out of it—and he had also a very red face as mamma always has when she is warm, and she is never cool in this country.

It was very amusing, learning the passengers, at first. You may remember, dearest, that I was always a great observer, and you used to say a *quiz*, which I deny, and would merely observe that it was not *I* who nearly drove that poor young man out of his senses at the race ball, and made him take too much wine at supper—a practice which I hear he has pursued ever since, and has had two attacks of what Clarence calls *del. trem.*, which is a complaint, I believe, caused by blighted affection, and something like a broken heart. Well, all the passengers had *sorted themselves* at the table, as you may suppose, before I joined them, and kept the same places every day. There were about an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and some of the flirting and *goings on* were *dreadful*. One young lady had a constant—or perhaps I should say inconstant—succession of admirers, who walked with her on the deck and danced with her there when there was dancing, and took possession of her everywhere. She was said to have made three distinct engagements and three regular “breaks off” between Alexandria and Galle, and seemed to be as happy as possible afterwards, and I must say that her admirers did not seem to make themselves particularly miserable about her—which I don’t wonder at, for after all she was not pretty, or at any rate not the

sort of prettiness I like. I have curious notions—you know I always had—but I really do think that features may be *too* regular, and eyes too blue, and all doctors and painters will tell you that it is not the sign of a good figure to have such a very small waist, and that an absurdly diminutive foot is very far from being a beauty; and a young lady whose own figure was certainly not open to objections of the kind, told me that she (the flirt) squeezed herself in dreadfully. I never speak ill of people, as you know dear, but I really was not sorry when we got to Madras and she left us. She was married, it seems, almost as soon as she got on shore, to a young officer on the staff (to whom it seems she was really engaged all the time) and is now the quietest thing possible—will scarcely look at anybody but her husband. I must confess I don't like people who are so very quiet as to be quite nonentities.

You saw all the bonnets I brought out with me. Well, two of the little boxes are left behind at Suez; and when I came to open the others, I found, as you might have expected, that the lost ones were the two best of all. You remember that dear one—I don't mean dear in the sense in which papa did when he heard the price of it—that dear one made of white chip and orange blossoms, which you laughed so about;—I'm sure I don't know why you laughed, for I assure you *I really did not* know what orange blossoms were for when I chose them, and when the bonnet came home of course I could not send it back. Well, that went, so did that beauty made of lace—real lace you know—and pink rose-buds, which my cousin Charles said when I tried it on, became me more than any of the others. I cried dreadfully as you may suppose, for there is no chance of replacing them here. All the fashions are



two months old, if not more, as they must be, for fashions change only once a month, and the voyage takes five weeks, though of course one is a little earlier if one sends to a milliner in Paris and get ones things out viâ Marseilles. Of course you will laugh about my losing the orange blossoms ; but really if I had *seriously intended* what you mean, I should not have been worse than some of the young lady passengers who came out by the same mail ; for one of them really brought a wedding cake ; it was hermetically sealed in tin, otherwise we should have asked her to cut it ; and I know that several had not got their new things marked, because they were not certain what would be the eventual initials.

Apropos of admirers, I—but really you know I never liked attentions from too many people at once. On board I was dreadfully tormented. I do not mind telling you, in the purest confidence, that I had at one time no less than seven persecutors. There was a stout elderly gentleman—a major of course—who used to sit quietly and watch me for hours together. He was a week before he ventured to speak, and then he seemed as if he had patiently waited for an opportunity of saying nothing, or at any rate what amounted to little more ; and this operation he would repeat as often as he conveniently could, and with 'no other result. Then there was a griff, just coming out in the civil service ; he was *gallant*, almost to a fault, but certainly he never bored me, and I must say I made him useful enough. He had of course come out under the new competition arrangement ; but he took care to tell me that he was a relation of one of the old directors, and had interest enough to have got his appointment half a dozen times over under the old system. Papa, who heard him say so, remarked afterwards that he did not show much

good sense in priding himself more upon an advantage which he owed to accident than a position which he had earned for himself. But papa has strange notions, and says things at times that are almost rude ; and without pretending to have any opinion upon the point, I must say that young Mr. Dowbson made himself very agreeable, and had what I am told is the best appointment of any class in the country. Another of my particular friends was very gay and pleasant, but certainly not very *gallant*. He used to say that his idea of perfect happiness was a combination of cheroots and ladies' society, and I must say he tried to effect the combination as much as possible. He used to ask me to walk with him on that part of the deck where smoking is allowed, which of course I would not do, so he took his revenge by bringing cheroots furtively upon the quarter deck, and was besides always going down for pegs, from the number of which he was always wanting it appeared that he must have had a great many hats and coats to hang up. Captain Racketts, in fact, was rather *fast*, and he made my brother so too I am afraid, for Clarence has developed amazingly under his tuition. He has—besides growing his moustaches, which papa would not allow him to do at home notwithstanding the movement—gained such a confident and off-hand air that you would scarcely know him to be the same person. He has a great many additions to his vocabulary that are so distinguished as to be quite unintelligible to me; though I am getting on very well in slang, and he talks nonsense with so easy and assured an air that the ladies seem to like it a great deal better than if it were sense.

But I need not go through the list. There is one young man whom I have not mentioned before, and I don't know why I should mention him now. He is

certainly better looking than anybody else on board, and paid immense attention to me. Of course I don't care about him in the least, but there is something so earnest and respectful in his evident admiration that I cannot treat him with contempt. I have told you that I don't care at all about him—Mr. Dulcimer his name is—and I infinitely prefer the society of Captain Racketts who has so much *savoir faire* and knowledge of the world; still I think that if the ship was on fire, or we had struck on a rock, or had fallen into any great danger, I should, supposing papa and mamma and Clarence were not near, prefer seeking his assistance to that of any of the other passengers; or if I had any great grief I would rather confide it to him; but I am very foolish, and don't know what I mean, and I tell you again that I don't care at all for him. I should inform you that there is a mystery about him which makes him more interesting to me than he would otherwise have been. Nobody seems to know exactly who he is, but he is supposed to be the heir to an immense fortune, travelling for his amusement. How very nice!—fancy how romantic!—and at the same time how very proper in a worldly point of view!—to be a mysterious stranger, whom nobody knows, and at the same time heir to an immense fortune! There could not be a more agreeable combination.

But I must confess to have been a little annoyed with all my admirers. I noticed a decided difference in the course of the journey, in the entertaining powers of most of the passengers. The gentleman who was all anecdote and vivacity at Gibraltar had scarcely a word to say for himself at Alexandria—he had talked himself out. The “agreeable rattle,” who joined us at Suez, had shut up by the time we reached Galle, and at Madras

was a demented idiot. All the lively ladies, who were full of town gossip, and seemed inexhaustible at the beginning of the voyage, showed signs of being thoroughly exhausted long before the end; and when a talkative lady has nothing to say, I must confess in all charity (for her companions) that she is rather a dismal person. The only event that kept us up towards the end of our journey, was a little romance in which Miss Marabout figured. Miss Marabout was the young lady who came out engaged to the gentleman whom she was supposed never to have seen, but of whom, it seems, she had seen enough to dislike.

But here I should remark, what delightful flirts all the P. and O. Company's Officers are. I have heard of fascinating men before, though I never met with many of them. At home I was not particularly troubled with my conquests, though—as *you* know dearest—we were not without them. A sea voyage is considered to be trying, but an overland journey—the sea part of it—is certainly worse. I don't know much about naval officers, never having met any except on shore, where they all claim to be landsmen, and feel a nautical allusion as a personal insult. But for real attention to ladies commend me to—I mean of course save me from—the P. and O. The Captain has always a certain gravity about him, and I believe he never flirts, except when he proposes marriage on the spot, and to do him justice he never does this unless there is a calm sea and a reliable chief officer. The chief officer in his turn has his sense of responsibility, and to do *him* justice also, he never flirts unless he *seems to mean* a matrimonial proposition, with a seven years' engagement to go through afterwards. But below these grades there seems to be a general determination to be as agreeable as possible,

which tells not a little upon the female passengers by the end of the voyage. The doctor is always a most devoted man, and makes conquests wherever he can; but he is nothing to the purser, who makes them wherever he chooses. One may resist the doctor; his delicate attentions and nice medicines may pall upon the passengers in a little time; but the purser seems irresistible, for his fascinations too frequently take a form which it is difficult to withstand. He has certainly the power of making the voyage far pleasanter than it could possibly be without his aid; and the delicate little lunches and other stray refreshments which he is able to convey to *certain persons* express more than could be communicated in the most eloquent words, and more, too often, than the gay and gastronomical deceiver is likely to mean. But so it is, and I fancy this is the reason that so many young ladies who have commenced the journey "engaged," change their minds before its conclusion. But to facts. Miss Marabout, as I have told you, was affianced to a gentleman at Madras. Well, all went smoothly, and she would probably have married him, but soon after we left Galle a change came over her; her spirits rose and her lunches became more frequent; and the night before our arrival at Madras (we were to arrive there in the morning) I heard her plight her faith to the purser under the paddle-box. They were married next day, as soon as we touched; for had they kept a clergyman waiting for them among the surf the arrangement could not have been more neatly effected. So the end of it was that the young lady did not stay at Madras, where she would have met her *fiancé*, but came on with us to Calcutta, where there was no chance of his turning up, as he belonged to a Madras regiment, quartered up the country, and had only a week's leave. I heard that

the bride felt some scruples as to the propriety of retaining his presents—they were very pretty, and she was very proud of wearing them upon her neck, wrists, and fingers, and she had besides a quantity of plate, upon which the initials of her *fiancé* were engraved. I can only hope that her better nature—or at any rate her better half—caused her to return all these things—the plate especially, as the initials upon it would not have looked well to the guests of the purser's bride.

There was another little romance, which I cannot help mentioning. Among the passengers was a Dutch family, going to Batavia, where the papa held a high official post. The two daughters were very pretty and *piquante*, and so unlike our general ideas of *les Hollandaises* ! They did not even talk in their own language, but either in French or English. Well, one of the gentlemen on board got up a violent flirtation with the younger, which was rather too bad of him, as he was engaged to be married. He was very melancholy when his flame left us at Galle, but recovered himself in the course of the next day, when he “vented his feelings,” as the novelists say, in some verses, which are so stupid that I will send you a copy of them. He called them—

#### THE LOST OF YESTERDAY.

Across the Indian Ocean  
We speed with every sail ;  
Ceylon is just behind me,  
Before me some pale ale ;  
I linger late at tiffin,  
And sipping—'tis my way—  
Recall in a sweet day-dream  
The Lost of Yesterday !  
The sea to-day is sombre,  
The sky has lost its light ;

The birds can scarcely flutter,  
There'll be no stars to-night ;  
The Bentinck, that I likened  
To Cleopatra's bark,  
Has now become a vessel  
Of ordinary mark.

Her sails no more are purple,  
No silver oars give life,  
Her flutes and cymbals now are  
A simple drum and fife ;  
The captain's but a captain,  
The agent (bring some ale)  
Has now become a person  
Who merely bears the mail !

The bloom is off the Bentinck,  
She takes in coal in vain—  
The spark that gave her lustre  
Can ne'er be lit again ;  
The claret is all tasteless,  
(I'll try a little more,)  
And curry can't console me,  
And everything's a bore.

Too fondly I recall now  
That eye of laughing light,  
The lips,—ah, to have pressed them  
Were sure too much delight !—  
The gentle intonation,  
The swan-like little neck,  
And the heart that beat to mine when  
We walked upon the deck.

To bathe in the soft moonlight—  
To count the stars—to hear  
The wind's roar and the sea mew  
With one so dear and near—  
To talk the wildest nothings,  
Or in silence to say much—  
To listen to her breathing  
And to tremble at her touch !

All this—'tis well 'tis over,  
 My heart is not for her,  
 And fancy, though 'tis fickle,  
 Has strength to make men err ;—  
 I feel a sacred duty—  
 Here, steward, don't you hear !  
 I've asked a dozen times for  
 That glass of bitter beer !

The beer's improved—our instincts are  
 Too sacred to control—  
 I'll eat Dutch cheese while thinking  
 Of her who holds my soul ;—  
 I'll take to drinking Hollands,  
 And drown, as best I may,  
 In her land's lovely liquid,  
 The Lost of Yesterday.

I must here break off, but will send you more news  
 by next mail.

Your fondly attached friend,

HELOISE.

3.

*From Clarence Simpkin, Esquire, Calcutta, to Adolphus  
 Sparks, Esquire, Parthenon Club, London.*

MY DEAR OLD FELLOW,—I write to you as soon as I  
 arrive, almost, just because you said you knew I  
 wouldn't, and I like to steal a march upon you. Well,  
 here I am in the Gorgeous East, accompanying the  
 governor in the wild goose chase upon which he has set  
 his heart, and apparently sacrificed his head. However,  
 I like the thing much better than I expected. The  
 coming out was capital fun, barring one little *contretemps*  
 which nearly compelled me to fight a duel with a military



man\* on board, who, however, did not care to meet me. I must confess that I expected a savage country, and roughing it, and all that sort of thing, and was beginning to lament for the glorious London life that I have lost. But in point of fact, if it was not so much more hot and so much less expensive, Calcutta would not be so very unlike London after all. You can get everything you want at the shops, and a great deal that you don't want; and as for the prices I have heard that they are very low, but cannot say for certain, as I find that the tradesmen never ask you for their money—so my visit has cost me nothing, at any rate as yet. Indeed I am told that nobody pays anybody for anything, a principle which, if judiciously carried out through every class of the community, comes to exactly the same thing as if everybody paid everybody, and is, I suppose, a realization of what the governor means when he says that “a commercial country is supported by its credit,” though he had himself a considerable weakness for ready money, and used to dun his customers without remorse. For my part I buy everything I take a fancy too, and so do my share towards the national prosperity.

We are all living here at a boarding house, and have as yet seen but little society beyond it; though I perhaps have seen more than the others, as I have been about a great deal with a capital fellow who came out with us, Captain Racketts. He has shown me all the lions of the place. We dine together three or four nights in the week at Wilson's (he has a club, but he says its jollier

\* Mr. Clarence forgets to tell his friend that the “military man” was only an unposted ensign. This is an allusion to a passage in the life of the Simpkins upon which the correspondence is strangely silent. Miss Simpkin, our readers may have observed, does not refer to it even to the friend of her bosom.

not to go there, which is just what we used to say of the Parthenon, if you remember, when we wanted to enjoy ourselves.) You can get a very good dinner at Wilson's for—I'm sure I can't say how much, never having enquired, and the Hall of All Nations being part of the same establishment, we have always the opportunity to make one another graceful little presents, in the shape of cheroot cases, jewelry, and articles of various kinds of *vertu*, which one is always wanting somehow after dinner. There are not many places to go to in the evening, it must be confessed, but sometimes we make up card parties (these are the only things for which one requires cash by the way: I always pay punctually the next morning, and the others will I suppose do the same by me, when they lose). At other times we play at billiards at some rooms in a narrow street not far from Wilson's, where one meets with very agreeable society, and quite free from that conventionalism which is the curse of civilization. I have not been able to find any place at all like the Cyder Cellars in Calcutta, which is of course a great inconvenience, for there is a time of night (about two in the morning) when one gets tired of every other place. But Racketts says that all these things must come with the increase of the European element in India, and indeed he says he has heard that a speculation of the kind is being got up by an enterprising capitalist, who has already been ruined three times, and who ought therefore to know what will pay.

Splendid place this for horse flesh. Costs you a mere nothing compared with English prices. I don't know much about these things myself, but fortunately Racketts does; so I placed myself in his hands, and he got me a magnificent animal from a friend of his, or rather a dealer. I have had him since the second day I arrived,

and ridden him on the course whenever I could get my billiards over in time. We have not arranged yet about his price, but Racketts says he will see to all that, it will be a mere trifle—not more than a thousand or fifteen hundred rupees or so. There can be no doubt of his being a first rater, for he has some figures marked upon his loins, I can't exactly make out what, but they look something like the date "1845," but at all events I know that it is a mark only put upon the very highest class of horses. Besides, I am sure he is a good horse, for he does not throw me, as some wretched brutes used to do at home, being gentle almost to a fault.

I told you I had not been much into private society in Calcutta; but I had a notable adventure in that line the other night. You remember Wigglesworth, that importunate fellow for companionship, who always forced himself upon us at the old Erec—before it came to grief. Well, he recommended me to some relations of his here, and I accordingly went to call upon them. As we are a distinguished family, travelling for our amusement, and nobody knows anything about "the business" (that was) we have a certain recognized right to make the acquaintance of anybody we please, and should do so more than we have done, but for the governor's absurd pride, or humility which ever it may be, which makes him object to what he calls intruding himself upon people who don't care a rap about him. However, I had a reason for calling in the present case, so to the Wigglesworth's I went. They were out when I called, but I dropped a ticket, as the niggers call it, and as a ticket upon such occasions is always a ticket for soup, I was not surprised at getting an invitation to dinner the day afterwards. So on the evening appointed, I drove to the house, or what seemed to me the house, though as they are all

alike, from the white walls and green verandahs, to the salmon and the host, and the turkey and the hostess, I may be pardoned for having made a mistake. However, I got to *a* house, just at dinner time, and as the native servants do not take the trouble to announce one's name, (which is no loss by the way, for what English they have, seems to be given to them to conceal their thoughts), there was nothing to give me or my entertainers a warning in time. I noticed that the host and hostess were somewhat excruciating in their attentions ; but of course I attributed this to Wigglesworth's recommendation, and the importance of my family, my own pleasant appearance and manner having of course something to do with it. The prettiest girl in the room was assigned to me to take in, and the marked homage of everybody, especially of her mamma, was very gratifying to my vanity. I did not talk much to the man of the house until the ladies had left the table—only a few common places about my voyage out, &c.—but when the delightful period in question arrived, he came round to me, and congratulated me in an incomprehensible manner about my prospects. He did this so impressively that I felt bound to enter into the subject, and with my head full of the Doon and the governor's speculations, said that tea was a very good thing in this country. This it seems he understood as a hint that I should be glad of some of the beverage in the drawing room ; so in a smiling manner my host led the way to that apartment. When we arrived there a curious spectacle presented itself—the lady of the house with an open note in her hand, looking a full length picture of surprise, which, upon my entrance, was mingled with a look of evident suspicion and some indignation. Motioning her husband across the room she shewed him the note, and

the effect of his perusal of that document was to make him an evident sharer in her emotions. After a moment or so he approached me, and with an air at once cordial and cold, like his iced curacoa, asked me my name. The information which I furnished elicited a puzzled rejoinder, principally addressed to himself, of "some mistake." But why should I prolong the narration of the scene merely because its *denouement* seemed to me to occupy the period of about two years and a half? A few explanations on both sides and the truth became apparent. I had got into the wrong house, and had been mistaken for the son of a Lord Somebody who had just come out in the civil service. He had gone to sleep in the afternoon owing to his ride and his punkah combined having got into his head, (he did not, however, enter quite into these particulars, which I learned afterwards) and did not awake until about an hour after the time fixed for dinner. This accounted for the late arrival of his hurried note of excuse, and the impunity with which I was permitted to work out my delusion. I am bound to say, however, that the people of the house—their mystification once over—were very far from resenting my intrusion, but seemed as much amused at the mistake as I was confused, and paid me every attention until the movement—on the part of some bigwig, without whose permission one dare not stir upon such occasions—was made to go; and then I need not say I availed myself of the opportunity like a shot. I afterwards found that the people of the house were government officials of considerable calibre, and, on the strength of my appointment to the service, I was very nearly passing in Hindostani, being nominated to a high legal appointment, and made to marry the prettiest girl in the room—all at once and almost upon the spot.

I told Racketts of my adventure that night at the billiard room. He said that had it happened to him he should have made it *pay* by walking into the young lady's affections while he had the opportunity. My private opinion is that he would have done much, as I did—but that is Racketts's way of talking. It did not prevent his playing very well, however, for he made forty-two off the red ball immediately afterwards, and somehow I fancied my own play that night must have cost me something like five rupees a shot. Still it is pleasant playing with Racketts—he is so cheerful and full of spirits.

Yours' &c.,  
CLARENCE SIMPKIN.

## 4.

*To Mr. John Waitman Esquier, Futman, at Mrs. McKaw's,  
Finsbury Square.*

Ho ! Jon ; this Calcutter, of all the places I ever sea, do beat them all.

We come from the ship in long boxes like coffins on poles, called Pallin Keens, and up to this present riting, which is called a boarding hous, though no bords have I seen, for the floors is all stucko, which the maids is black men, and scrubs them with a ragg, something like I done the door steps in deer old England, when you stood at the door in the fine summer mornings, and a smoaking of your pipe, more beautifle than the Capting, or any one, leastwise I thought so. A need not to fear as I shall marry a black man, which they has two wives a peace already, the nasty beasties ; Ho ! Jon *my* Art will never change, are you kep the Chameleon one which

I give you at parting, which my hone is amost broken sumtimbs.

There is only I made hear Bside myself, which is married to a young man in the Valiantears Guards, and is amost a Lady herself, seein they are all gentlemen in that Phors, xcep a few Snobz. Me and she has our meles to ourselves quite grand, with a survint to wate upon us (a Black man with a long Bird) and one bottle of Bear regular.

I wish, Jon, you could C the figgers we wos the 1st day after sleeping hear ; I mean with the musketeers, which was at us all nite. This is small Inn sex, something like an At, which bites ; O mi, just don't they. Miss Hellocase, she cum down to brekfast with a Noas like I dont no whot, and all the fammuly did nothing but scrach till I thort they would have wore theirselves into wholes like a Kalendar. Nex nite they found out that they ought to have putt theirselves into nets like a fish, which was hanging to their beds ; which I found out and shode them how.

There is a place here called the Strand, but quiet diffu runt from the strand, which there is no temple bar, and only one Pelisse which wears moustareh and a Higlass. And the pepel drives hupandownd, lying in their Kar-ridegs as if they wos in bed ; with blak men, honly phancy, a driving of them, and hothers with hosses tails a hanging on behind, which is called sizes, though I don't think there size is any great shakks either. The shopps is all privit houzes, and so is the Churches outside, xcep one or 2, such as the New Kithedrul, a most butifle building like Pankridge's. But ho Jon, if you see the linning drapers and the dentisties a riding and a driving as if they wos the lauds of the land, and the blak fut-men without enny calves a sitting on the baks of their

koches, or a running along, I'm sewer you wd go into a phitt.

Don't forget Jon to send me the Penny Pullpit, for there is no clurjiman here likd Mr. Sturgeon: And likewise the "Family Instructos" for I ave not finished the storey of the Dieman's Venjins, and I want to No if the Marquiss murdered is Mother, and who married the Maid of the Marshes, so no moor at present from yure umbel and effexshnat

MARY JANE PATTEN\*.

The City of Paleasses,  
October 18.

5.

*From Miss Heloise Simpinkin, Calcutta, to Miss Juliana Myrtle, Baker St., Portman Square, London.*

DEAREST JULIANA—We are still in this warm, bright, and *dreadfully gay* place, which indeed I am not, at all disposed to leave, though papa says that we must soon make preparations to go into the country—*up* the country as they call it. We have been everywhere and seen everything, and know some *very nice* people. They look rather white, and their manners are a curious con-

\* It will be observed that we have not ventured to interfere with Miss Pattens grammar and orthography, which are somewhat anomalous. The fact is that her education was commenced, as we understand, at a charity school, but never finished, in consequence of her entering Mrs. Simpkins' service at the early age of eleven.

When for instance she speaks of her "Chameleon one" she probably alludes to a heart in Cornelian or some such simple memento with which she had presented Mr. Waitman, and we doubt not, from the general tenor of her letters that her own heart, which she says is so fragile, will be found, in the end, in the right place, and will get a good character for another, if necessary.



bination of the *fast* and the *formal*, which I believe is the proper *tone* to be observed in all good society. As for their paleness, that also is considered a beauty—with the ladies at any rate, and my healthy complexion was voted by some *sincere friends*, who wished as they said to give me a *good natured hint*—to be the reverse of *distinguée*, in fact just a little vulgar! Of course I was glad to be told this in confidence, as it would have been very mortifying to have been the last to make the discovery; and I have been for the last fortnight occupied in *improving myself* in this respect. In order to gain the required *tone*, I make excuses to avoid going out in the morning, though it must be confessed the *fresh air* is very tempting; and I drink vinegar and water—*on the sly you know*—which I hear that dear Lord Byron used to do with the same object; and I also have myself laced in a little more than usual, which I believe is a very good thing to prevent the colour from getting up into the face. Papa and mamma of course know nothing of these contrivances, and I take care that they should not, as I know they would object to them. Papa always wants me to go out riding with him, *almost before it is light*, and mamma says that I do not take enough beer—a beverage which she declares is absolutely necessary to sustain life in this country—which it certainly is, if the object of life is to go to sleep, but this is certainly not my idea of perfect happiness. Papa thinks it a great pity that I am losing my colour, and indeed several gentlemen have told me that the sight of *English roses* on a lady's face is almost as refreshing to them as a trip home. But papa has strange old fashioned notions upon this as on most other subjects, and the other gentlemen, I think, only say so to flatter me; for my lady friends who have been ten or twelve years in the

country, and whose complexions are all like damask—not damask roses but damask table covers—must know better what is *convenable* and *bon ton*.

The climate, however, has a different effect upon different people. It makes mamma *quite red*; but this is of course not so important in a person of her years; and Clarence too always looks flushed—too much I think, and unnaturally so, especially when he has been staying out for some days, which he sometimes does with Captain Racketts. He says that he begins to find his expenses rather more than he had anticipated, and rather more indeed than he likes to tell papa; and I have had to give him little sums of money from time to time—until indeed my allowance is quite *used up* for the present. But Clarence goes about a great deal, and I can fancy that it would not look nice for him to be obliged to do differently from other young men. Moreover, if he does spend money it is not all upon himself, for he has made me some very pretty presents of jewelry—English jewelry of course—from the large shops here, which are quite a treat even to see, though I always long to carry their entire contents away with me.

I told you that we knew some very *nice people*. The fact is one sees so many that it is difficult to remember them all, especially the gentlemen. After a ball in particular it is wonderful what a number come and call at your house, and I must say they make themselves very amusing. I need scarcely tell you that I have had several *conquests* already, and one—I don't mind telling *you*, my dearest friend and earliest confidante,—one offer—quite *pucca*, as they say in this country. He was a military man, very agreeable and well bred, and I believe quite sincere in his attachment; but I did not like him well enough to marry him; besides I do not

wish to marry at all at present, and told papa so, and as papa says he would never force me in such a case, I had no difficulty whatever in refusing—and papa actually said I was the best of girls for doing what I did—though it would have been a very good match, and many girls would have *jumped* at it. I am afraid that poor Captain Clarion—that is his name, only you must not tell anybody—*felt* it very much, and it was with a mournful air of resignation that he asked permission not to be denied altogether the privilege of visiting at the house, and to be considered in the light of a friend. Of course I had not the heart to refuse him so natural a request, and he continues to call occasionally, and is I hope getting over his disappointment.

You may remember I mentioned to you a Mr. Dulcimer who came out with us. I am sure I don't know why I drag in his name *à propos* to marrying—but I merely wished to say that we see a great deal of him, and that he improves upon acquaintance. And when you remember what a high opinion we all had of him before, I need not tell you that this is saying a great deal. He is in fact quite an *ami de la maison*, and comes whenever he likes, for both papa and mamma think him very quiet and agreeable, and I certainly see nothing objectionable in him. I cannot, however, tell what particular attraction he finds among us; for papa has almost always some fussy old major with him, engaged in endless talk about tea speculations and the Doon (I am sure I can't see why they should think of going so far for such a very simple article, which can be got always at Wilson's, nicely done up in packets and quite ready for use) or else some indigo planter, in from the country, who is continually talking of "the plant," just like some of Mr. Ainsworth's dear delightful heroes, planning a burglary. As for mamma he cannot find *her*

very amusing, for she, dear thing, finds it a great deal too hot to talk to anybody but the servants, with whom she has had dreadful disputes—and was in fact once very nearly put into prison for beating a bearer whom she found in her bedroom. It seems the poor man merely intended to make the bed—as the men servants always do in Calcutta—and mamma coming into the room at the time thought he was going to steal the sheets. In the little scuffle which ensued, caused by neither of them understanding a word of what the other said, mamma actually gave him a slap in the face—which we all said was wrong though amusing—though not so amusing after all, for she had to appear before the magistrate about it. I was dreadfully frightened of course; but it fortunately happened that the magistrate was a very good natured man; and you may guess what a *great lawyer* he was, for having heard an explanation of the affair he laughed, and said that the charge was a frivolous one, and dismissed it. Everybody said it was very fortunate that another magistrate, who has now gone home, had not to deal with the case, as he would most certainly have imprisoned poor dear mamma for three months; as he neglects no opportunity to lower the Europeans in the eyes of the natives—but papa says this is quite consistent on his part, as he begins by lowering himself. As for Clarence, he is *scarcely ever* at home; so I have to go through the whole work of entertaining Mr. Dulcimer, which, however, is not a difficult matter, as he always seems amused, and although he does not talk much he is never dull—so the time passes quite pleasantly, and with a quickness that is sometimes surprising.

Your fondly attached friend,

HELOISE.

## 6.

*From Miss Mary Ann Patten, Calcutta, to Miss Amelia Sophia Rosherville, lady's maid in the family of John Stiffneck, Esquire, Portman Square.*

DEER AMELIAR—I ope this finds you well, as it leaves me at present. I received your kynd note, which as I now confess I did not expect, for I know well the duties of *high life* take up a great deal of time, and as Jon used to say out of the noospapers (arter his old master left him the fifteen pun legacy) pruparty has its dooties as well as its rights. As you expected, I am not at all surprized at what you tell me of that Jon. He was always a deal too stuck up, and I told him so more nor wonce. Wiskers of course is wiskers, and carves is carves, and must always make their way, but wot is either if the Art is not in the right place. The wiskers may get straight and they can be curled up again; the carves may get thin, and there is such a thing as padding. But there is no curling irons for the Art that is false and padding is a hollow mockery. Besides, I should like to know what right Jon has to be stuck up. He belongs to be sure to one of the most hancient families in Hengland, and has lived in it five years, and bears harms—upon his buttons—which is the prettiest that ever I seed; he knows his dignity I grant, and once when he refused to carry a coal-scuttle higher than the fust floor, his hemployer, upon the thing bein told to him, respected his prejudice; for his hemployer is a reel friend of the people, which means I believe always a blowin up of the govinment at public meetings, and for a short peeryod wile he was in the House of Kom-

mins, and before he was a turned out of it for havin paid his way into it—as he said—a practice which he had always observed through life. Well, but for all that, though Jon may be a grate man in his way, there are *other folks* perhaps—who don't want to be in his way any longer—who may be heven *grater* if they like to say the word. You and me Ameliar, I always said, was maid for something more than we seemed, and if we did look a little high we had some reason to do so. It has been put in books again and again, and wot is in books must be true, that young girls like you and me have often married the *Lords of the Land*, and have hadorned the helegant spears upon the very tops of which we have been placed. I don't mean to be vane, you no I was never that Ameliar, but though I ses it as shouldn't say it, I does get a deal of hadmiration in this here country, enough to turn the head of a girl if it was at all light, which mine never his, except praps after my beer. My persishun his of course hanomalous. I am honly a servint, and I have servints who call me a lady, and heven my own country people treat we with much more kurtesy than I was hacustomed to in my native land, where masters and mistresses is apt to be 'aughty, and even the young gentlemen, though they may go so far as to kiss one on the stairs (a piece of imperence *I never* would permit) are all dignity in the droring room, and look as if butter would not melt in their mouths. But here a young girl who knows herself, meets with a deal of hattention, from the gentlemen igpecially. Halready has it been my lot to see the truth of wot that bootiful writer Bulwer Lytting ses in his "Lady of Lions," that "Love, like death, levels all ranks, and lays the housemaid's broom beside the Captain's sabre." Hindeed so great is the hopportunities for forming

halliances with the harristocracy of this country, that andsome girls among domestics are great rareties. Ladies as knows the country will never bring them out, for as they ses, it's hard to have them a marryin into the Army and the Civil Service (the service has been always very civil to me, I must say, and more so than the pleasemen at home, and wots more one hasn't to give them any legs of mutton) and then have to receive them upon an hequality. I must say owever there is one set among the new Civilians as I never could abide, and that's the Kompetition wallers, as they's called—people who gets into the service through their tallents or edication or wotever it is. They may be clever on all that, but they ain't the people for my money. No: as I said when they wanted me to take a situation in Bloomsbury, give me the hold nobility:—they knows what is due to the sex, of which I have the honor to be an umble member, and wots more they don't wear spectacles, as most of the wallahs do, through havin, I'm told, been in the habit of bathing their eyes in a stuff they call midnight hoil—which leaves them igstreamly short sighted for heverything out of their offices. It was honly the other day that a lady came to call upon Miss Simpkin. She come sailin out of a big carriage, and up the stairs, a great deal larger than life, and there was such a deal of bowin and talkin grand in the drowing room for the next half hour, that it quite bewildered me, and I wondered how I should be able to go through the hordeal if ever my turn came. I heard all this from the next apartment, which was seperated only by a curting which hallows you to see nothin much higher than the ancles of the company. But pictur my igstonishment when I made an excuse for going into the room, and recognized—who do you think Ameliar?—but that

hinsignificant creetur who was for some time nusmaid in the corner house of our old street, not the public house where the pleaseman on the beat was always thinking something was the matter, and comin out sayin it was a false alarm and wipin his mouth with his cuff—but the great big house belongin to the people who went to Injia afterwards, and took her with them. Well, this minx is now married to one of the most richest merchants of the city of Pale-asses, and thinks herself somebody, which indeed she is generally considered to be. I thought she coloured up when she met my eye, but I did not trouble her by any egspposure, partly out of charity, and partly because I wished to do as I would be done by, and did not know how soon I might be glad of a similar favor from one of my own sect. I could not forbear, however, telling Miss Simpkin, who was dreadful indignant, and wondered how the creetur had the imperance to call upon her. But as I was sayin, real English beauty is appreciated in this country, and I ses it who shouldn't say it. For, you cannot tell how sweet all the gentlemen would be—if I would allow them, which of course I don't. I could not help bein amused however last night by a friend of Mr. Clarence's (Mr. Clarence is carryin it on *dreadful*) Captin Racketts. He came ome with Mr. Clarence hafter the famly had retired, and there was no brandy and soda for them, which of course they wanted. It happened that I was a sittin up studyin Jonson's Dixonary (Jonson they say was a very clever man, and when he couldn't think of the meaning of a word used to fill up the time by writing a play, and he got so familiar to the public by the means that they called him Ben, though his real name was Samivel), for I am resolved that my edication shall be equal to the most elevated spear on which I



may be placed, and you may see that both my spelling and my style has become much more literary than it was. Well, I was a sittin up, and as I kept the keys, couldn't forbear from takin out to these two young gentlemen the little refreshment they required. Of course they were both much obliged, and igstremely komplimentary, and Mr. Clarence I thought was inclined to pay me the same little attentions that he used in England, before he growed his mustachus and got too proud. But the Captin, there was no mistake about him. He has *dreadfully* wicked looking eyes, and said I was the best looking girl in Calcutta, and immensely like the picture of "Sherry, Sir," which he said was to be found in all young gentleman's collections. The resemblance, indeed, he said, was extraordinary. However as they both only kept saying the same thing over again—which I suppose was because there was no different kind of spirits in the house—I felt sleepy, and retired. The next morning I could not forbear gettin the pictur the Captin had spoken of, which I found was to be had at Messrs. Thacker and Spinks. It was done very natural—the decanter and tray was wonderful, the girl a little too forward lookin perhaps, but really I think somethin in my style though I do not wish to make the same flattering comparisons as the Captin.

I should not forget to tell you that Miss Simpkin has a sweet heart, a nice mannered young gentleman named Dulcimer—believed to be of immense riches—it is a clear case, or I know nothing about courtship. So no more at present from yours affectionately,

MARY ANN PATTEN.

## 7.

*From Miss Heloise Simpkin, Calcutta, to Miss Juliana Myrtle, Baker Street, Portman Square, London.*

I snatch one moment from all time, to tell you, my dearest friend, of an event which I might have prepared you for in my last, but had not the courage to do so. It is as you must have suspected. Mr. Dulcimer has made a formal demand for my heart and hand. The first has long been his, and for the last I told him to ask papa. Papa made only one objection—that it was not quite clear who Mr. Dulcimer was—as if anybody could doubt, when he so clearly carries birth and fortune in his countenance. However, papa is to write home to his friends, and in the meantime has given his contingent consent, and mamma and I, knowing that all enquiries must be satisfactory, have taken care that no time is lost in making the preparations. We are out from morning till night—shopping, and getting me the prettiest possible things for any *trousseau*. Mr. Dulcimer is here every night—never misses by any chance, and the more I see of him the more assured am I that he will make the best of husbands. I must break off now, as the mail is to go immediately, but if there is an after packet, I will keep this back and send you a few lines more. Breakfast is just over and we are once more going to the shops. Ever your attached friend,

H.

P.S. *Midnight*.—There *is* an after packet and it will take you dreadful news. We went out this morning as I told you and had made nearly all our purchases, when we remembered that we had forgotten nothing less important than the bonnet. So off we went at once to one of

the principal milliners. I am quite calm now, and can tell you all that took place with a resignation as great as if the humiliation had been incurred, not by myself, but by an intimate friend. Well, mamma asked an imposing looking female who was sitting in the room, if she had any bonnets—of the latest fashion, such as were suitable for a wedding. The lady replied that she was not aware, but would ask her assistant who attended to such matters. She accordingly sent a message by a native servant to another room, towards the door of which my back was turned. I was bending down over some beautiful black lace flounces that attracted my attention, and thinking how nice they would look over a pink silk skirt, when the mistress of the house observed that the young man was bringing some bonnets which she hoped would suit. I turned round, and then with a bonnet in each hand, held upon the blocks, stood, who think you? I scarcely dare write the name—MR. DULCIMER!

I believe I fainted. They say I did. But a bottle of the Jockey Club Bouquet—my dearest of perfumes—brought me to myself; and my mamma, my dearest of mammas, then brought me to the carriage. We agreed on the way home to keep the secret, but of course it came out at dinner, when I hope I conducted myself as a young lady should, whose affections have been tampered with. Mamma was very severe about the dignity of the family; but papa, I am sorry to say, treated the matter sarcastically, although it was evident that he was deeply mortified, and said it was quite plain that our pretensions to be great people were not so readily recognised as we had imagined. He added that he had no great objection to anybody's position in life, so that they were not ashamed of it, but that Mr. Dulcimer had behaved like a snob, and that whenever he married his daughter to a man

milliner he intended to do so with his eyes open. We all agreed that after what had occurred we had better leave Calcutta immediately; and Clarence especially, who had put on his hat to go and horsewhip Mr. Dulcimer, and who was only dissuaded by our representations of the ridicule that would be incurred by making the thing public—agreed to this last proposition with wonderful alacrity, for he had hitherto seemed so fond of Calcutta that we should have despaired of getting him to leave it at all. However, everything has been settled to night, and to-morrow morning our dak is to be laid for the north-west.

H.

8.

*From Captain Racketts, B. N. I., Agra, to Brevet Captain Ardent, E. I. U. S. Club, London.*

MY DEAR ARDENT,—I promised to tell you all about our friends the Simpkins, so here goes. That is to say here goes to tell you as much as one can decently put into a letter, without insulting a man by supposing that he would be fool enough to read it. To tell *all* about the Simpkins I should require a series of volumes as long as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and I flatter myself that I am not fool enough to write a work like that, either as regards quantity or quality. Well, as you know, they are an amiable and estimable family, with the best of intentions—but this steed, as very often happens, does not carry them well. It bolts and rears with them, and sometimes sends them sprawling in the mud. This is unpleasant and my position as picker-up of the family is rather an onerous one. You will doubtless hear of some of their varied adventures from Pater-

familias, so I will content myself at present by telling you—for the fun of the thing—a few particulars which are not likely to reach you from any other source. They relate to the youthful Clarence, whose career is a very promising one, and who under my distinguished guidance, begins to reflect credit upon the family. You know that I was always of opinion that a man must get into a certain number of scrapes in the course of his life, and that like certain diseases, the earlier in life he has them, and gets them over, the better. Accordingly I began by treating Clarence as I would a man of five-and-thirty or so, and by giving him ideas beyond his age, accomplishing a saving in the real years of his life, of which he cannot fail to feel the advantage. He is now not much above the eventful one-and-twenty, but he has got through as many of the difficulties of life as most men of ten years older—an obvious saving of time which I only wish had been vouchsafed to me. But we have not all the same advantages. I was obliged to find out my follies by degrees. Clarence does so at once, and is beginning to get a sensible fellow, at an age when I had no more idea that I was an ass than half the people we know in that predicament. But to facts.

The first thing most men do after getting into Calcutta is to get into debt, and of course Clarence did like most people. Some carry the practice further, and also get into No. 1 Chowringhee. But I thought this would be going too far, so I did not permit our friend to rush into extremes. However, such a thing might have happened easily enough, without my interference being of any avail; for the young dog had certainly contrived to involve himself to an extent which would have done credit to many English settlers at Chandernagore. He had a very good allowance from the dad, but of course that

was wanted for incidental expenses—debts of honour and the like—for the rest tick was the rigorous principle adopted, and the consistency with which he carried it out is beyond all praise. It was fortunate for him that he generally had me by his side, for though I did win a little of his money, now and then, it was of course all fair, and I kept him out of the hands of the vultures, a certain number of whom are always hovering over the newly imported. But of course the tradesmen's bills *would* accumulate in the meantime, and it is wonderful what gregarious things tradesmen's bills are. Of course they came in all at once, and of course Clarence was not prepared to pay them, even one at a time. It was a rich treat to see the picture of amazement that he presented. And he was not more astonished at the suddenness of the proceedings than at the amount of the demands. He thought he might have owed a small bill at one place where he had dined sometimes and asked a few friends now and then. It was possible that there might be a mild account for jewelry at another;—he had bought some little things in the way of rings and buttons, though he wore very few such ornaments himself—only half a dozen or so of the one on his fingers, and a single set of the others at once upon his waistcoat;—and there was nothing more except a few stray things he gave to his sister. There was a small matter of saddlery that he had purchased—a mere nothing, but though it might be English, it could not amount to much. He was so fresh out that he had not much opportunity of running it up with the tailors; nevertheless there were a few Indian requirements which had to be supplied, and these he felt certain could have amounted only to a trifle. He was surprised to find what a “moderately priced” horse cost in

Calcutta, and I must say he was sold in this particular, but I intend to bully the stable-keeper into a reduction. I need not go through the interesting list of our friend's liabilities: suffice it, that after receiving a bill of R.'s 350 for glasses of sherry and bitters taken at the Auckland Gardens in the evenings, he fairly gave way. I never saw him take anything else, but the amount *was* rather large for about six weeks. He grew melancholy, and then I thought it quite time to cheer him up. So I told him that as he could not pay all these sums, the collective amount of which we dared not calculate, and that it would be most injudicious to "ask papa" under the circumstances, even if asking papa would have done the smallest good, and as his creditors with the instinctive sagacity of their vocation were already, upon barely twelve hours notice, which they had not given by the way, but taken for themselves, adopting plans for preventing him from leaving the City of Palaces, the best course he could adopt would be to waive the privileges of his rank which entitled him to these pecuniary salutes, and to leave, as quietly and unostentatiously as he could. But how to do that was the question. Driving in one's buggy to the ghât, or even accepting the medium of the lowly Dumdummer, are not very ostentatious modes of transit, but they might perhaps be described as dangerous; and then the steam-ferry had its perils; and even the ignoble dingee, in which he might have crossed to Howra was not without the accompaniment of a certain amount of anxiety. Under these circumstances there was nothing for it but a little invention, so we contrived a plan, the results of which I will give you in the style of Mr. G. P. R. James.

Well then, it was towards the close of one of those sultry evenings peculiar to the Presidency of Bengal,

that two travellers might have been observed wending their way along that populous causeway of Calcutta known as the Strand. The one was a gentleman who might have seen some thirty summers, whose garb, though a simple undress, indicated that he belonged to the military profession. He was of fair mien and agreeable aspect, and the scorching sun of the East had dealt kindly with him, although a certain wary expression upon his broad and open brow seemed to indicate that his intercourse with the world had not been of a character altogether apart from pecuniary transactions. His companion was of lighter build and more fragile frame. He was equipped in garments which were of the fashion peculiar to the cad or plebeian of the period, and indeed were not without signs of servitude and dependence. The second person whom we have described, in fact, bore the character of the humble retainer of the first, that of a soldier servant, who would black his master's boots in quarters and follow him to the battle field when required by the peculiar exigencies of circumstances over which he had no control. To the ordinary observer his outward man may have seemed rude and unpolished, as became his ostensible station ; but to the more attentive student of the attributes of humanity, there were not wanting signs of superior organization and culture. His hair seemed to have been rudely clipped, and his other hirsute adornments to have been trimmed in an uncouth fashion scarcely appropriate to the face ; and even the hands of our traveller, although soiled and neglected, still bore indications of an acquaintance with soap at no remote period. A diamond ring of the first water, and a ruby and an emerald of almost priceless worth—to one who had to pay for them—would have assisted in giving a refined character to



the fingers, but as these adornments were prudently worn in the waistcoat pocket of their possessor, they did not fortunately attract that attention which they would otherwise have done. Nevertheless, there was sufficient of gentility hidden beneath the plebeian externals of our traveller to warrant a suspicion that his ostensible character was assumed. In short, to drop G. P. R. James, who begins to be a bore—the two travellers were exactly the two whom you have probably by this time identified. The first being myself, and the second young Simpkin, whom I had managed to pass off as my servant—after a good deal of reducing in the way of elegance and distinction, which to do him justice, I must say, he stood very well, besides acting the character better than he thought himself capable of doing, or than I thought it worth while to tell him that he did. At any rate I got him safely off; and if he did succeed in making himself look like a cad for the time being, he did nothing more than some of the first gentlemen in the land—I mean England of course—could accomplish without any great effort, or exertion of unnatural talent.

Well, in this manner Clarence Simpkin and myself made our way to the Upper Provinces. We were friends, of course, when alone; but when strangers were within optic-range, I took care that he should be appropriately deferential, never accost me without giving me the salute, and altogether act up to the character that he had assumed\*. The family went on before us, so they knew nothing of these proceedings, and firmly believed that Clarence had stayed behind merely because dâks could not be supplied at once for the entire party. I cannot tell you of all our adventures on the road, but you will probably hear of them from some of your correspondents. Suffice it that here we are at

Agra, having a very pleasant time of it. Paterfamilias has gone on to Delhi, where we are all going in a day or two; but we were not quite so hot upon the place and so much in love with the natives as old Simpkin, and would not leave the station until we had used it up. So you will most likely be treated to old Simpkin on Delhi out of his own head, for it is certain that none of us have afforded him assistance in forming first impressions.

Your sincerely,

JOHN RACKETTS.

9.

*From Peter Simpkin, Esq., Delhi, to Brevet Captain Ardent,  
B. N. I., East India United Service Club, London.*

MY DEAR SIR—After a variety of surprising adventures we have at length reached this, the city of the Great Mogul, as it once was; for alas! since that injured monarch went into involuntary retirement, everything around one reminds us only of the past. The ruins, vast even in their decay, which abound not only in the city, but for miles in its environs, form a striking monument of the superiority of the noble race that we have supplanted. And with what? Let black bottles, bungalows, court-houses and jails, answer. I assure you, I feel like Sylla contemplating the ruins of Charybdis.

To you, who know the mild Hindoo—for I will not truckle to the arrogant conventionalism, by which the twenty-years-in-the-country-and-speak-the-language-men attempt to create an artificial distinction as regards the Mussulmen and women, who being natives of

Hindoostan, are of course Hindoos. To you, I say, I need not depict the sensations with which I have observed the degradation of that interesting people. It were idle to multiply instances. The other day, as I was reluctantly chastising my bearer, for refusing to bring some beefsteak into my room, the poor creature joined his hands in an attitude of prayer, and called me *khodâwund*, which, on enquiry, I find, means Godlike one. To this we have brought the once haughty lords "of Ormuz and of Ind."

Determined to see with my own eyes, and not be hoodwinked by any of the bloated hirelings of the (happily late) East India Company, I have engaged this man, who speaks English very fairly, and whom, fortified by an excellent little Manual by Professor Forbes, I employ as my interpreter. And at every dâk bungalow I managed to enter freely, by this double method, into conversation with the servants maintained to attend to travellers; and I need not say that their revelations have been such as amply to reward me. In almost every instance it was the same story. Not enough pay to furnish them with food, their once happy homes laid waste by the collector, with fire and sword. • Such, sir, were "the short and sweet memorials of the poor," coupled with affectionate expressions of devotion to my person, (when they found who I was, they persisted in taking me for a royal commissioner, appointed to enquire into their grievances;) and my aspirations for their welfare. Unlike the knife-grinder of our revered Governor General's father, *they had* stories to tell you, that would freeze your blood, but for the heat of the climate.

This, I must confess, is considerable; the season of my journey has been what is called "the cold weather;"

but I must say that if the Commission to which I so fondly look forward, be sent out here, its members must be prepared for considerable personal suffering. *I have lost two stone, all but a pound, since I landed.*

Candor compels me to add, that the absence of stockings and even of breeches, which I at first attributed to the griping hand of the revenue authorities, I have since found to be more directly attributable to the nature of the climate.

My family have enjoyed but poor health since they came up the country. To see the wife of one's bosom covered with prickly heat is but a poor compensation for her being confined to the sofa, though the latter circumstance contributes not a little to the personal freedom which I have made the above mentioned use of. At Agra, we (that is excepting Mrs. S. who was unable to join us) visited the world-renowned Taj Mehal by moonlight. This building, as I need hardly tell you, was erected by the great emperor, Noor Jehan, over the remains of his favorite consort, Lalla Rookh or the Merchant Placer, from two words signifying *Lalla* "a merchant" and *rukhnā* "to place, or fix." The particulars will be found in Mr. Moore's immortal Epic, a work tending more than any with which I am acquainted to exhibit the former greatness of the native race. Clarence, I regret to say, polluted the tranquility of the scene, by an unmanly personal encounter with a highly respectable coloured gentleman in a waistband, whose costume he considered too slight for contact with European females. I blush to record that he threw this unoffending man into the river, but, being an excellent swimmer, a few rupees consoled the soft and placable creature, who retreated, muttering blessings on the "Feringnee kafirs."

In a few days we start for the sanatorium of Simlooree Tál whence I will communicate further with you about business matters, as I hear there are plenty of estates to be got dirt cheap from the jemadars, or native proprietors, who appear to be totally unacquainted with the value of money. And remain (for self and partner),

Yours faithfully,

P. SIMPKIN.

10.

*From Miss Heloise Simpkin, Agra, to Miss Juliana Myrtle,  
Baker Street, Portman Square, London.*

DEAREST JULIANA—Thanks be to the journey—it has distracted me from my distresses, and feeling them acutely as I do, I must confess to having been much interested and amused by our adventures—of which we had more than I have time to tell you, on the road. The first part is all railway, and is therefore very like travelling in England, except that it is not pleasant to see a dozen black men with scarcely any clothes on running away with one's boxes in different directions all at once, and the sensation one experiences on being landed at the terminus, which they call Raineygunge, on account, I am told of the *refreshing* showers which fall there for three or four months in the year, is that one has arrived at the end of the habitable globe. However, we found some carriages standing waiting for us, which looked as if there was a chance of going further;—but *such carriages*, like nothing you have ever seen or perhaps heard of. If you can fancy such a thing as an omnibus made to carry only one, and in which you have to sit or rather lie *lengthways*, you may have some idea

of the vehicle, which is drawn by a single pony, called a "dâk," which is always so spirited and restless that it never will go, or at least not until it has been *dragged about and beaten dreadfully*, and has made several attempts to get inside, for such I supposed to be its object from the way in which it *would* come and look in at the window. I shared one of these wretched contrivances with our maid Mary Jane, and papa and mamma occupied another, for although they seem only made to carry one, two *can manage* to get in, though it is certainly difficult to get out again, and with a large party it is considered advisable to travel in pairs, as otherwise there might not be a sufficient number of *dâks* on the road to take them on. Clarence and Captain Racketts were left behind for this reason, and followed us the next day. Well, all our luggage, except some that was sent up by the waggon, was piled upon the top of the carriages, and we went inside, having to lie down, for the sake of saving a little space between the seats, into which I took care my bonnets, packed up of course, should be placed. A *certain* bonnet was not there, I need scarcely tell you, for after what took place at the milliner's on that dreadful day, we did not buy it. But it was very pretty, and I almost regret, that is to say I regret not having the bonnet: as for *the occasion* on which it was intended to be used I am glad that it never took place, though I must say that during our acquaintance with Mr. Dulcimer, I never met with any than the most—but I am wrong, and papa was certainly right. He (Mr. Dulcimer) was no doubt *dreadfully deceitful* and did not behave well. He may say that he could not help being what he was, but why did he not tell us so at first? It would have been quite impossible for me to have loved him had he done so; for it is very

dreadful to think of a man descending to such wretched employment for the mere sake of money, especially when it is so romantic to have no money at all—a condition which is always capable of improvement by coming suddenly into property, or finding out that one is a lord, as people do in books and on the stage—taking one's chance in fact, which is very delightful, especially if there is a good chance to take. For my part I think there is nothing so nice as the state of a poor gentleman—they always talk so disinterestedly about wealth and worldly honours, and make one quite ashamed of belonging to a family which is prosperous in its circumstances, as some families cannot help being you know ; for, as a lady of our acquaintance used to say, when talking of the difficulty of disposing of all the shares and things of that kind that had been left her by her husband, *money will accumulate*, and really the question in these days of speculation is, what is one to do with it? Papa laughed, I remember, when she entered into her distresses upon this score, but I believe that she is right, and I think it must be very miserable to have too much money, and it is certainly a very vulgar privilege, to judge by the nice kind of people one meets who have none at all.

Well, we went off from Raineygunge after a severe contest on the part of the dâks, who could not be persuaded to go at all for a long time, and after being hurried along the road at a horrible pace, which threatened every instant to overturn us, we were at last overturned as a natural consequence. I was clinging on tightly to both sides of the vehicle, and having balanced myself carefully, fell without sustaining any great hurt ; while Mary Jane, who was taking the same precaution, was rash enough to scream with all her

might. As one can only do one thing at a time with success, she was naturally embarrassed; and while her screaming was perfection, her holding on was faulty in the extreme. So in the overturn she sustained some severe bruises, and although but little hurt, was certainly not improved in temper by the time we arrived at a *dâk* bungalow, a kind of stable for the *dâks*, placed at intervals on the road, and whither we had to be drawn after the carriage had been set up on *three* of its wheels by a number of black men, called coolies, I believe, on account of the state of heat into which they get through their violent exertions, at least such was the explanation which Mary Jane volunteered.

Well, we all got safe to the bungalow towards evening, and here our miseries might be said to have ended, but for the unfortunate fact that they had only just begun. Papa and mamma, who had had better *dâks*, and had not been overturned, were in advance of us, and entered the house first, and on our reaching the entrance we heard most dreadful cries—those of mamma, and a loud voice in apparent expostulation—that of papa. We were at first afraid to enter, but mustering up courage to do so at last, we found a *fearful* scene being enacted.

Mamma was lying on her back on the teapoy, as they call the rough beds of the country, which never seem to have any bedclothes on them, *screaming dreadfully*, and papa was holding her by the hands, and keeping her from rising, which she was trying with all her might to do, he talking at the top of his voice, and telling her that she was very foolish, and that there was nothing to be afraid of, and showing signs I must say of having rather lost his temper. Mamma's wrath appeared to be directed towards the khansamah, a fine looking but dreadfully dirty man, with a long beard and the back of



his head shaven up to his turban, who was standing in a most composed manner, with his arms folded, waiting to know what we would have for dinner, and taking not the smallest notice of the upbraidings of mamma, although they were evidently directed against himself.

Papa was delighted to see us and at once handed his patient over to Mary Jane, saying, "Try if you can keep your mistress quiet, she has made a mistake concerning this man, and if she persists in it, she will get us all into trouble." It appears that poor dear mamma, who is often in the habit of taking strange fancies into her head, and whose likes and dislikes of individuals are always unchangeable, had been seized with the idea that the khansamah was a mutineer, and intended to murder us all. "Nobody ever deceived me, my dear," she said when I went to her, and added my persuasions to be calm to those of Mary Jane and papa, "nobody can deceive me, my dear, in telling a person's character by his face, and that is a bad man I can see at a glance. I know he is a murderer, and has taken his present place in order to make poor travellers his victims. We shall all be killed—all—oh! oh!"—and here mamma screamed again with renewed violence, and had we not held her tight, would, I am certain, have seized the man by the throat. The man, however, merely repeated his former question, in which I heard the words "hookum" and "moorghee," and the last mamma insisted meant something about killing or dying—in proof of which she appealed to a little "Forbes's Hindustanee Manual" which she always carried about with her, and insisted upon looking for the passage. This, however, had the effect of keeping her quiet for the time, and papa took advantage of the opportunity of getting rid of the man, by saying, "hain, hain," and

nodding his head to every suggestion which he made, and he accordingly departed in high glee. It seems, as I afterwards learned, that native servants are never surprised at anything that Europeans do—which is partly attributable to their general lethargic temperament, and partly to the very strange kind of people whom they continually encounter. I afterwards learned, what I am almost ashamed to tell you, that he actually attributed dear mamma's excitement to her being—yes I do assure such he believed to be the fact—tipsy. We should all have been dreadfully indignant with him had we known his opinion at the time; as it was, I rather admired his calmness, and the apparent good will with which he set about making preparations for dinner. During that meal—which was served on a table that papa remarked seemed to have got the ague, it shook so all the time, besides being covered with a table cloth so curiously crumpled that the knives and forks would not lay straight upon it—mamma was much more quiet, but her antipathy to the khansamah was still as strong as ever. First she thought that all the food was poisoned—a process which papa said (he is so funny sometimes) would have been quite unnecessary, as it was nasty enough to kill anybody in its pure state—and she wanted the man to taste every dish before we commenced to eat it. This he steadily refused to do, though his demeanour was still quiet and respectful. She would not allow him to stand behind her chair, as she said she did not feel safe when she had not her eye upon him, and she knew he was scowling at her behind her back; and once when he approached with a knife (to lay beside her plate) she jumped up and seized the chair to defend herself with. All this was very embarrassing, but we could not help being amused—poor

dear mamma was so much in earnest in her apprehensions, and persisted that she had never been deceived in a person's character in her life, and that papa was so stupid that anybody could take him in. Finding, however, that the man did not attempt to stab her, she grew more calm, and was even so far composed as to discuss a potato ; but at the close of dinner she experienced a relapse. This was when the khansamah brought her something in a little bottle with a large stopper, which certainly looked like pomade for the hair, but which turned out to be red currant jelly, which in this tempting form he offered as a finale to the feast. This uninviting concoction mamma declared to be poison pure and simple, and wanted papa to call a policeman and give the man in charge, in the meantime securing him and tying him down on the bed with the punkah rope. Papa, who was certainly in a good temper, said that the cookery was so bad that there was no chance of finding a policeman in the neighbourhood, and that with regard to arresting the man himself, and tying him down to the bed, perhaps the man might object to the arrangement, in which case some confusion might ensue. Mamma upon this said he was an aggravating man, and had no spirit, which of course she did not mean, but it is her way, and papa took it very quietly, and indeed did not seem to mind it at all. In the meantime Mary Jane had improved the occasion by attacking the currant jelly herself, which she finished—having always a beautiful appetite—and as she did not perish immediately in horrible convulsions mamma was quieted once more, though she still made fierce gestures every now and then at the khansamah, and would have one of the trunks unpacked in order to find an old number of the *Illustrated News*, to see if he was not very like a

portrait of the Nana, the original of which she strongly suspected him to be. But when the portrait was produced and compared with him, he still retained his equanimity, and seemed to be the most difficult person to quarrel with in the world—and it was fortunate perhaps for us he was so, or perhaps he might have been made a rebel after all.

It was decided that we should not proceed on that night, and we were just discussing how we were all to be accommodated in the two rooms which we were then occupying, and were consulting whether we could not have the other two rooms which constituted the bungalow in addition, when a noise of wheels was heard, and the khansamah informed us that two sahibs had just arrived in a dâk gharry, and had taken possession of the rooms in question. This was a dreadful disappointment, but there was nothing for it but to submit. There was a rule, it appeared from the bill hung against the walls, that in the event of a bungalow being crowded, all the ladies may be made to go into one compartment and all the gentlemen into another; but if we had enforced this rule we should not have been particularly the gainers, indeed the only difference would have been that papa must have left us to ourselves—and so we should have been deprived of our only protection. Moreover, it only occurred to us at the last moment that two rooms would be enough for us, just as two gharries had been, and the discovery being made, we easily accommodated ourselves to difficulties which would not have been difficulties at all to other than inexperienced travellers. There was no difficulty in fact except as regarded Mary Jane, and she was really very distressing in her protestations that “she had never been used to this sort of thing, had been brought up differently,”

and so forth,—as if anybody expected that any of us had ever been brought up to sleep in dâk bungalows in the north-west provinces of India, as papa said with his usual ready wit.

The two strangers in the other rooms appeared determined to enjoy themselves—the khansamah entirely deserted us, and seemed incessantly running about to supply their wants. Almost all night soda water seemed to be going off, and the whole bungalow was impregnated with the smoke of cigars, poor papa's precaution, in smoking his solitary one in the verandah, having been quite thrown away. We felt rather curious to know who these two gentlemen were, and in the morning, when we were preparing for our departure the travellers' book promised to afford the information. This book is intended for a simple record of the names of travellers and the amount they have paid for their lodging, together with any remarks they may have to make in reference to their accommodation, attendance, &c. But it was generally made much more amusing, though some of the jokes I am sorry to say were *dreadfully vulgar*—especially those that papa would not let me read, but which he carefully copied out, to put into a book which he threatened to write in condemnation of *the tone* of Anglo-Indian society. Besides comic verses, about "pegs" and the "cutting of pay," both of which seemed to be inexhaustible themes, and insulting remarks made by travellers about those who had preceded them, there were pictorial sketches in which that amiable gentleman, our governor general, especially was made very ridiculous. Fancy what a shame, he was generally drawn with donkey's ears appearing above his coronet, and smoking *such* a long cigar, and in all kinds of ridiculous attitudes, such as embracing a sepoy, or being

dragged by a mob of Europeans on board a ship with "homeward bound" written on the paddle box. Jokes of this kind were very frequent, and I am told that they are to be found in most of the travellers' books on the road—which I agree with papa in thinking shows a want of respect for authority. Well, we looked at the two last names in the book : the entries were as follows :—

"Cornet Buggins, H. M.'s 101st (Royal Fantail) Dragoons, and Mr. Foolscap Tapeley C. S., arrived at 9 p.m., (by a watch that won't go); left as early as possible next morning, and never intend coming back again. Khansamah, ugly and stupid; bearer frightful and idiotic. Everything to eat very bad; everything to drink first chop, as we had brought it ourselves. Went to bed at ten having first put on our white chokers, but could not sleep in consequence of noisy party (of ladies) in next room, who did nothing but cuss and swear at the servants."

I should not venture to copy such *dreadful vulgarity*, especially the *latter part*, which I need not say was a *mischievous invention*, but for what followed. We were reading the *shameful composition* over again, and papa was making a note of it to send in a letter to the *Delhi Gazette* (which he said he intended to sign "Old Flick," in order to suit the facetious tone of the correspondents of that journal,) when it occurred to me that I knew the handwriting. "Surely, papa," I began to say, "that writing is"—when at this instant we heard a shout in a well-known voice, and who should come running in but Clarence and Captain Racketts !

They had not taken the trouble when they arrived to enquire our names, having been told by that horrid khansamah (I think *mammā* was more right about the man than we gave her credit for being at the time) that we were only *common people*—which was very imperti-

ment, and could have been caused by nothing but Mary Jane's vulgar way of pronouncing her *h*'s. I heard indeed from a gentleman in Calcutta, that the dreadful treatment which this letter received from low Europeans in India, has done more to destroy the prestige of authority and respect for the British name, than could have been effected by a successful mutiny, as the natives are very sensitive on this score, in consequence of their having been educated under the old régime, when any European not pronouncing his *h*'s properly, was immediately deported.

We were very glad, as you may suppose, to see dear Clarence and his friend once more, though the former had had his hair cut *most absurdly*, and did not look nearly so nice as usual. We did not fail, of course, to *rate them soundly* for what they had written in the book, and I will do them the credit to admit that they did look rather foolish at being found out. Papa, however, I think was most annoyed at having lost his subject for the letter to the paper—for of course it would never do to expose the affair *now*.

We soon prepared to start—the whole party together ; but we were not destined to do so without another interruption, caused this time by papa's extraordinary admiration of the native character, which is always developing itself at inconvenient seasons. He is a great amateur of photography, and nothing would satisfy him but having the portrait of that stolid khansamah before we left. I fancy he half suspected the man to be a *prince in disguise*, for mamma's opinions have *great influence* over him, though he will not always confess it. At any rate he brought forth his apparatus, and set it up in a most scientific manner in the compound, and then, calling the khansamah (whom he had just astonished

by a very profuse *bakhsheesh*), directed the man to place himself in front of it. You should have seen the horror and terror immediately depicted upon the poor man's countenance! It seems he mistook the instrument for some murderous machine, and thought that he was to be blown away on the spot! He immediately began to run, but Clarence and the captain held him fast, though he struggled violently, and his screams were awful. The captain tried to explain the real state of the case, but he would not listen, nor remain still enough for papa to perform the operation. So at last he was allowed to escape, which he did, communicating his terrors to everybody in sight, so that in a few minutes there was not a single native (except our own servant) I believe for half a mile round. Even the coachmen had disappeared; for they all fancied that we intended a general massacre. So there we were, left on the high road, without any assistance for prosecuting our journey. Fortunately, however, the gharries were packed; so, as it seemed hopeless waiting for the coachmen, the three gentlemen drove us on to the next stage. It was fortunate that we did *not* wait; for we afterwards heard that the bungalow people roused the whole neighbourhood to their assistance, and came down to the spot in formidable force, to find us, fortunately, flown. Your fondly attached,

HELOISE.

11.

*From P. Simpkin, Esq, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains,  
India, to Captain Ardent, London.*

MY DEAR SIR,—We have just arrived at this romantic spot, where I intend to make my fortune, like the ancient Sabine at Cincinnati.



Our journey—of which I have already had the pleasure to wait on you with samples—has indeed opened my eyes. Mis-government, sir, met me at every stage. Instead of the “network” of railways so often described, I found myself perpetually snared in the most ordinary description of traps. If you remember the infamous dâk gharry of India, I need hardly depict to you that roomy coffin ; drawn usually by an animal that would have done for the charger of Death in the Revelations, and of whom it seemed a doubt whether he would sooner arrive at his master’s stable, or land his passengers in his halls. I often wished I could give the poor wretched quadruped the benefit of the Act, Martin’s Act, but he always began either jibbing or kicking the moment such an idea occurred to me, and under the burning sun of this country, I was obliged to get on the box and flog him—an office which Clarence soon found too much for his susceptibilities—while the coachman turned the carriage on by literally “putting his shoulder to the wheel,” until off went the skeleton with a clatter that sounded as if his bones were all rattling, and then Jehu had to run his best, and take his chance of recovering his seat by my side with a leap worthy of the late Mr. Payne, the Drury Lane Harlequin.

I have very little space left for narrative. Mrs. S. has fits almost daily at the servants she has to keep, from whom she dreads all sorts of outbreaks and massacres ; and the rate at which the money goes out is a more legitimate source of alarm. But I trust to put that straight as soon as we are settled on our farm, where, by a strict attention to business, S. and Co. hope to benefit selves and country.

The young people would unite in kind regards, but are gone out together on ponies to look at the Snowy

Range. Mary Jane is getting very troublesome, fancies herself a lady, and was found yesterday reading "The Sorrows of Werthing" to a non-commissioned officer. For self and partner.—Yours faithfully,

P. SIMPKIN.

12.

*From Miss Heloise Simpkin, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains,  
to Miss Juliana Myrtle, London.*

At last, dearest Juliana, I find time to write to you from this place, where we have made a retreat during the warm weather ; and a very charming kind of retreat it is, for it is one to which all the world follows us, everybody, that is to say, who can make it convenient to themselves, or inconvenient to the government, to spare the time. We are now in the midst of the season—the fashionable season, of course, I mean—and very gay we find it, I can assure you. The journey up is rather fatiguing, and you may suppose that it requires some little exertion, from the fact that we are at present some six or seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. The horse-dâk—of the nature of which I have already given you full particulars, brings us only as far as some place with a name ending in "pore" or "nuggur," where the regular road ends ; and after that we had to be carried on men's shoulders—not pick-a-back, that would be *too absurd*—but in a kind of palankeen, called a *dhooly*. This is a much more convenient contrivance than the *palkee*, which people use in Calcutta. It is very roomy and light, being simply a kind of bed, made of wood, with webbing stretched cross-wise to lie on, and enclosed on all sides with a similar framework, covered with canvass

on the outside, thickly varnished so as to be made waterproof, and lined inside with some kind of light cotton. There are sliding doors at the sides, so that one may get in or out. Within the edifice you make up a kind of travelling bed, and as it is sufficiently large to sit up or lie down in as you like, you may make yourself very comfortable, as I need scarcely say we all did. These *dhoolies* are furnished with long poles, which intersect them, and which, with the assistance of a leather strap, the natives manage to sling upon their shoulders, four of them bearing the burthen—only one inside—quite merrily. At any rate, they did so in my case; but papa and mamma being a little *portly*, as you know, had some trouble with their bearers, who stopped every now and then, and screamed for *bakhsheesh* in a *very rude* manner.

As for our luggage, you may guess that it could not be carried in the frail vehicles to which we committed ourselves. So it had to go by *banghy*, which I imagined to be a kind of cart, and so did we all in fact; for while we were taking tea in the last *dâk* bungalow—where the road ended, and where, as it seemed to me, we were to make our *adieu* to civilization—Clarence kept rushing in and out, *badgering* the servants (to use his own curious word, which I believe is of sporting origin) to bring the *banghy* to the door, where our *traps* (another word of his) were all piled up high into the darkness of the night, and seemed to be meeting robbers half way. In answer to his frequent appeals—conveyed in as bad language as his vocabulary enabled him to command—the servants kept repeating that the *banghy wallahs* were all there, pointing them out as they sat crouching beside the boxes, some of them apparently asleep, others smoking the rude *hookahs* of the peasantry, which the

English call *hubble bubbles*. "But where is the banghy?" demanded Clarence, at last, I am afraid, losing his temper, at seeing nothing but a few sticks and ropes lying upon the ground. At last Captain Racketts came running from the opposite verandah where he had been smoking cheroots, and explained that these sticks and ropes were really the means of conveyance, the boxes being tied to the sticks, and so carried between two men, as you may see a tub sometimes carried by brewers in England. We all laughed of course at Clarence's needless anxiety, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing our things all safely on the move. The luggage headed the procession, we ourselves bringing up the rear, each of us in a separate dhooly, with many exhortations to the men to keep together, that we might not lose one another during the night. Of the dhooly bearers there was a great crowd; for we had to engage a sufficient number for relief every quarter of an hour or so. All this being arranged it was found that there was another requirement. It was necessary to have *maussalchees*, or torch-bearers, to save us from losing our way in the dark, and perhaps to keep off wild animals, who are by no means unknown in the savage region through which we were to pass. This want, however, had been anticipated by the servants, and several of these men were found at hand, provided with a good supply of links, and earthen bottles from which they continually fed them with oil when the flame grew dim. Of these materials were our procession composed; and it was a great relief to us all when it at last set out in earnest.

I shall never forget the night I passed. Sleep for a long time seemed out of the question. The monotonous chant of the bearers, to which their curious swinging trot keeps time, is supposed to lighten their labours, and

very likely has that effect; and I should not much object to it, as, after one gets used to it, it may well have the effect of assisting one's slumbers; but what really frightened me at first was the horrible noise that the rest of the men made by all talking together at the top of their voices, which they did every now and then as if in violent altercation. This continued at intervals all night, whenever it was supposed that we were missing the road, or any question arose upon which there could be a possible difference of opinion. In the midst of it all I managed to get a little rest. Then I was awakened on a sudden by a violent jerk, which was only the stopping of the dhooly. Looking out I saw that all the rest of us had stopped also, and a most extraordinary party we looked—the luggage in front, then the dhoolies, and nothing else to be seen but fierce looking natives with scarcely any clothes on—all lit up by the torches which threw quite enough light upon surrounding objects to show that we were in a dreadfully wild country. Upon the occasion of the first halt there was a great crowd round poor papa's dhooly, and a hot dispute going on upon the eternal subject of *bakhsheesh*. Papa, in a most absurd looking nightcap, which made him look like a benevolent pirate, was expostulating with them in a mild, but as he believed convincing manner, with the aid of a *Forbes's Hindustanee Manual*, to which he kept referring by the light of a torch which a man was holding close to his spectacles, assuring them that he denied no man his rights, but that as a matter of principle he would not be imposed upon. Mamma was also assisting the confusion by leaning out of her dhooly (she had on a beautiful *bonnet de nuit*, which she always kept by her in England, in case of fire) and expostulating with papa for foolishly giving way, which

it was evident he did not mean to do. How it would have ended I cannot say, had not Captain Racketts and Clarence come to the rescue. Clarence was about as helpless as papa, but Captain R. soon set things right. First he elbowed all the men away from the dhooly, and then, having ascertained the amount of their demand, gave them about a quarter of what they asked for, with which they were quite contented. It seems that papa had been too liberal in his advances in the first instance—a weakness of which the men naturally took advantage. The natives of India are just like horses. If they have to do with a person who does not know how to manage them they find out the fact at once, and play a thousand tricks which they would not dream of playing with one who was able to keep them in hand. At least this is what I heard Captain R. say; and he told us also that in travelling it was always advisable to make the extra payments to bearers, &c., in small and frequent sums; this encourages them far more than even a higher rate of pay given at the beginning or the end of the journey. It seems quite true too, what he says, that it is necessary to *learn* the native character with even greater care than the language—for you can manage without the latter by means of an interpreter, but the former admits of no such evasion, and ignorance of its peculiarities involves one in endless vexations.

To resume. Order being restored Captain R. and Clarence went to comfort mamma, and then they paid a visit to my conveyance—both of them smoking cheroots—fancy, *in the middle of the night*. I was glad to lean out and talk to them. We had plenty of soda water with us, so they opened some for me, which was wonderfully refreshing, and we had a merry little party for ten minutes or so, and quite forgot our troubles. The

gentlemen, as they generally do in this country, took cognac with their soda water—just a little, as they said, to kill the animalcula, an excuse which of course goes for nothing, as, if there was not that, there would be sure to be some other. At least this is what I heard mamma say the other day, and I have no doubt it is true.

After this, at about two in the morning, we resumed our march. There was less disturbance than before, but I did not get much sleep, for we were soon in the midst of a deep jungle through which the bearers had almost to force their way. The noise from the inside of the dhooly was as if we were making our way through a small forest, and that ten thousand branches were breaking at the same time, or tearing the sides of the conveyance to pieces.

By daybreak, however, the sound had ceased; and opening my sliding door, I was then *agrecably disappointed* at the prospect which presented itself.

We were already in the hills—or more properly speaking mountains—which stretched around us on every side. But as yet there were no signs of houses, or of any approach to civilization. I soon learned, however, from Captain R., who came up at the first halt, to wish me good morning, with Clarence and papa, who were quite fresh and vivacious, that we were not so close to our journey's end as I had supposed. We were passing through a range of mountains which were not nearly so high as those to which we were destined, and we should have to cross a great valley before we could reach the latter. There was one change, however, which was of a most decided kind. We had reached *another climate* in the course of the night. Although it was some time after sunset when we set out, the heat was then almost

unindurable, and we had scarcely believed Captain R. when he told us to take care to clothe ourselves sufficiently, and to have plenty of rugs and blankets in the dhoolies. The value of his advice we had begun to appreciate during the night, when we were glad to keep our doors closed, and to roll all our wrappings round us. So much so that, as Clarence remarked, it was very like going to bed, and indeed I can fancy a worse imitation. Papa too, in his dry way, declared that he should leave his boots outside his dhooly to be cleaned, and that he fully expected to find his shaving water and letters upon opening his door in the morning! But I am afraid I digress. I certainly was unprepared, notwithstanding my experience of the night, for the clear cold air which now greeted us; and I could not help thinking that it was something in favour of the Indian climate that from force of contrast each season becomes a luxury in its turn, and that if you find summer unsuitable you may change it to winter by a mere day's journey! Of course we made these philosophical reflections during the halt, and then we all found that we were dreadfully hungry, having partaken of no solid refreshment since our somewhat comprehensive "tea" of the evening before. A general enquiry followed into the state of our resources, which seemed to amount to nothing; for having had a great deal more time than we wanted to prepare in the bungalow, we had of course started in a hurry at the last moment. We were really beginning to be distressed, and Clarence had of course added to our annoyance by making fun of it, declaring that we had better "cast lots" like shipwrecked passengers, when Mary Jane fortunately came to our rescue. Mary Jane had displeased us a great deal during the journey by keeping



up a continued fit of crying, on account of the little inconveniences to which she, in common with the rest of us, had been subjected, protesting as usual that she "had not been brought up to that sort of thing," and in the middle of the night, during the great disturbance to which I have alluded, giving her mistress a month's warning, calling upon the native bearers to witness that she had done so, in case any question as to wages should arise, and have to be settled in the Supreme Court. Of course we all laughed at the curious time she chose for making her business arrangements, and this made her worse—so she had a sulky fit for the rest of the time, during which we followed papa's advice, which was to "let her alone—very severely." However, we forgave her freely in the morning, when she informed us that she had stowed away in an accessible portmanteau, a tin of Huntley and Palmer's mixed biscuits, which we managed to open somehow with a stone and a corkscrew, and then devoured voraciously, with the accompaniment of the never failing soda water, which we ladies at any rate took without any previous destruction of the animalcula.

After this *chota hazree*, or little breakfast, which satisfied everybody but Mary Jane, who sadly wanted "her tea," we set forth again in high spirits. Soon we left the chain of mountains behind us, and burst upon the most beautiful valley in the world. There were more mountains in front, higher than any we had seen; and at their foot was an actual hotel, at which we all stopped.

An hotel "up country" in India is a very different thing from the same institution in England. There are no solemn white-cravatted waiters ushering you into cold and expensive suites of apartments, where I have heard papa say you are bound to have wax candles even

in the day time, and bad wine at preposterous prices for the good of the house and your own detriment. Our half-way house on the present occasion was a thatched bungalow standing on a large piece of ground, with long ranges of stables, and vehicles of every description to be let out on hire. There were sheep also within the domain, and poultry in abundance, and carpenters and other workmen were busy in supplying the numerous wants of the establishment. The accommodation was not of a kind which we should have called comfortable in England, but it had the great recommendation of leaving you free to do as you pleased. There was a place they called a coffee room, the furniture of which seemed brought from all corners of the earth at all periods of time, the walls being hung with pictures in strict accordance with its incongruity. There were representations of Napoleon crossing the Alps, and of four young ladies, with red cheeks or white cheeks, and light or dark hair and eyes, as the case might be, supposed to represent the seasons; besides prints of the "fashions" of the year 1825, and one of that eternal Raffaele and Fornarina which in an evil hour the Art Union of London presented to its subscribers and cast upon the world to become a public nuisance. The books consisted of odd volumes of the Parlour Library which travellers had left behind them, and a complete set of the "Penny Magazine" from beginning to end. On one side of the apartment were a row of doorways with curtains hung upon a rod placed just high enough for a short person to pass under, and reaching not quite down to the ground. It needed no waiter to tell us that these were the bed-rooms, for as the wind blew the drapery in all directions, the beds were seen plainly in the perspective. These were only partially prepared for

repose; as everybody is supposed to bring pillows, *rezais*, and things of the kind with them. Among these dens our party was distributed to dress and prepare for breakfast, which was set upon the table in about half an hour. In point of extent and solidity it was about equivalent to three ordinary dinners; but in all places where Indian invalids congregate, the preparations are always on a large scale—they are all so healthy and happy directly they get on leave that it is quite a treat to see them.

The hotel, by the way, had one great advantage over most hostelries up country. It had a landlord who lived on the spot and who was not too proud to attend to his guests. At nearly all of these places which are held by Europeans, or half-castes, the landlords consider themselves gentlemen, merely because they have made a little money in trade, and so profess a dignified indifference to the arrangements of the house. The consequence is that the business is entirely at the mercy of the native servants, who let everything go to ruin, their masters usually included. The airs of the “ladies” of this class are very amusing. They have their carriages and saddle horses, and imitate French fashions in a manner that is truly ridiculous. Their great ambition seems to be to appear in full dress quite irrespective of time and place. I have really seen them at church in the morning in the same costume which they would wear at a ball.

Well, after breakfast the gentlemen went and smoked of course, and had a talk with the landlord—a fine old man, who had been a soldier—so as to “coach themselves up,” as they said, in the news, as they had not seen a paper during the three days that we had been on the road from Delhi.

After this we all felt the proverbial restlessness of travellers, and desired to be at our journey's end. At the hotel there was every possible accommodation for mounting "the hill," and of this we soon availed ourselves. It was arranged that mamma and I, and Mary Jane of course, were to make the journey in *jam-pans*. A jam-pan is a kind of sedan-chair, with the difference that it is open, though enclosable at will with curtains, which you can draw round you if you please, and so be quite secluded. It is carried of course by natives, like the dhoolies; but the bearers here are all well clothed, and those in private employ in the colours of their employers, as in the case of liveries at home. I told papa that he must keep one of these conveyances when we were settled in the hills, and Captain Racketts asked him what his colours were. He said that he had none that he knew of, but he thought wine colours—red and white—would be the most appropriate. Papa always will have his joke, sometimes out of season, as I must say I thought at the time.

It was arranged that the gentlemen were to make the ascent on ponies; and accordingly, at nine o'clock—we had breakfasted very early, as you may suppose—the latter were brought to the door. They were very ugly hacks, but used to the road, and therefore quite safe. Indeed few people will take up valuable horses, owing to the dangers to which they are exposed. As far as Clarence and Captain R. were concerned there was no difficulty; but papa, being rather heavy, and never used to riding, declined to commit himself even to the largest of the *tats*, both for the animal's sake and his own; so it was ultimately decided that he should go in a jam-pan, as gentlemen generally do when they are lazy, and that is by no means seldom. This being arranged we set off,

the *horsemen* leading the way, and the two *syces* in charge of the cattle scrambling after them. The sun was not strong as yet, and everything was in favour of a pleasant journey. Nor were we disappointed; though the ascent in some places was *fearful*. The road is of course a winding one cut on the sides of the hill, but so narrow in some places as scarcely to allow of a single horse making its way. It was terrible sometimes to see Clarence and Captain R. like little specks on the edge of a precipice of a thousand feet or so, trusting entirely for safety to the sagacity of the ponies, who upon such occasions are allowed to make their own way as they can. The danger, however, is not so great as it seems, the animals being just as anxious to avoid falling as their riders, and scarcely ever making a false step. Here and there, where the path is particularly hazardous, it is railed in; but this affords no protection should your horse become restive, which the ponies happily scarcely ever are, and for the greater part of the distance there is no protection whatever. The general pace at which you proceed is a walk, but here and there there is a platform where you may get up a canter if you please. In this way the equestrians often outstripped us, but we were sure to come up to them again soon, as the bearers keep up a steady pace which quite compensates for any temporary advantage gained over us.

The scenery—how shall I describe it? It is grand beyond all description. Hills, thousands of feet high, covered with foliage, and with masses of the brightest flowers, especially rhododendrons. From the road upwards you get a magnificent view of the valley of the Doon, than which I have never seen anything half so charming. When you pass the half-way resting place

you have fairly left the heat behind, and may *look down upon it*, in fact, with great contentment. The ascent altogether occupied about two hours, the distance being about five miles. A bold rider, I have since been told, will dash *down* in less than a hour, and indeed the descent has been known to be accomplished in half that time—at a risk of life and limb which I should be sorry for anybody I cared for to incur.

This sanatorium is built upon two hills, one rather higher than the other. The highest is more than six thousand feet. Both are commonly called Mussoorie, but the proper name of the highest is Landour. It is on this that the hotel is situated, and it is to this therefore that most travellers proceed on their first arrival, unless they have a house ready to go into. Having no provision of this kind we went to the hotel of course. Like all the other houses it appeared at first inaccessible; for one may well be in doubt how to get at places that all seem piled up one on the top of the other. But of course we *did* get at it, after a great deal of climbing, and jam-pans, ponies, and everything all safe, were at last fairly deposited at the door. Here I will take breath, and leave the detail of our further proceedings for another letter.

Your affectionate friend,

HELOISE.

13.

*From Miss M. J. Patten, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains,  
to Mr. John Waitman, Finsbury Square, London.  
Vyer Southampton and Ma Sails.*

MY DEAR MISTER DOUBLE YÔU—I was much obleeged buy ewer last, in which u ask me for an a count of hour journey. We come through sich a menmy plaices

that I feel like a fish out of water; there was Rgra, and Allory Bad, and the Sitty of the great Mow Gull (him as u sees on the plain cards, only he's gone to Arrack Can) where we got rum and all the delicacies of the seizum. And there was buildings at some of them towns like the Pavillium at Brighting, honly tumbling down; and sich a sight of soldiers. O my I! but some of them was black like the boy as plays the symbols in Kensintum Garlings.

We cum up the Trunk Road; honly there was no trunks to be scene, but a helley phant's that walked by at one place just like Ashley's. And, jest phancy, I dropt out of the garry, owen to my having a singin in my ed, and the brutial black as druv it went on, and never see me, as if he couldunt a lookt round if he liked. But they're all alike and the likes of them I never do like. So there I lay, and skreeked, thinking I was ded. But presunly up comes a young man, ho sich a little one; and ses e "bloueed if ere isn't a gal," ses e, "what a lark," ses e. So he helpt me hup, and we went along, to where there was a Regiment Intentse, almost all littler than im, for which reason their corpse was called "the Dumpies." I staid with them till they marcht, and then we went on to the next Bungere-low, wear we found Master and Missus, and jest warnt their a row! "Ere she is" says the Hossifer (a nice andsum young gent e was) "quite a Filly Delly Regiment o" ses e. So Master Clarence e larfed and blinked like winkin, and orf e went with the orf i sir, to smoke, and didn't I ketch it? But I spoke up, and ses I to Missus, "I can mind myself," ses I; "though I did fall on the road, I aint in a bad way," ses I. And then she got frightened, and I thought she was going to ave a phitt, but there was only 1 chair in the romb,

and one bed, and Master was a settin on it, with both leggs broke, so she only cride; and then Miss Heloeese she took and cried 2, and I adn't the art to leaf them, or make my bough when I sawed them in that dissolute condishem, for bless you ses I to myself, wot wood you du without Mary Jane.

And now Jon we are at the Ills, and a very fine spott it is. If you wos to put Primrows on the top of Hobin yew wood knot git sich a Ill as the least of thees. And ho, if you see the seen awry, it beats the Surrey Theayter; there is snow in the back like linning hung out to dry in the yard, and the Roddy Den Drums in flour is like a futnan in most beutifle scarlick and green uniform, hand maid me think of whom.

And the Millaturry walks about undressed (that's wot they call it when their sords is took off with their moostarch and two nicks) and all and is most perlite, and you could not tell them from the gentlemen, honly they doesn't sweorr so much at the blacks. There is a Corperal of Dragons most attentiv to the sects, which e is a Baptish inself and precches in Barriks most like deer Mr. Sturgeon. So hopping u are quiet wel.

I remain yours to comeand

MARY JANE PATTEN.\*

Po Scrip.—I've never got the Blood Drinker.

14.

*From Miss Patten, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, to Miss Amelia Sophia Rosherville, Lady's Maid, &c., London.*

Ho! that Jon, I am so glad I've done with im. He is a dirty creecher, and I've wached my ands of him.

\* The above appears to have been written during a period of returning affection for Mr. Waitman, which however did not last long, as we find by the letter which follows.



Now it combs out ye never antsurd my lettuce (which I rit im 2) nor sent me the Bludrinker nor nothink. To think that e wood ave demeaned hisself to ave maryd a woman as kep a public; so lo! Well let im b. There is others ear, as has Is, and olds their eds hire, and does not look down upon a pore survint.

I never see anythink like the attentions of the military, xcep the way they stands at es, in the presents of ladies. There is a Corporal, a most serious young man, and of the best blood let me tell you. E was at Oxfud Collidge, and took is Batchelor's degree too, but e aint obleeged to live single for all that, e tells me, like some of them felloes on Fortune's weal at Collidge; odd fellow's I do think from all I heerd tell.

Well, e cum ear fust to keep master's a counts, and sichlike; and then I arst Mistres, and she sed Mr. Percy—that aint is real name—mite teeche me to reed and rite and cyfer at odd times. And mi, how e du go on, and squeedges mi and when e makes me old the pen; I feel as if I should never a done learnin.

Five days ago we was a settin in a little room I as to myself; for there such mites of houses here,—most like a cottage at UrnBay—and so we ad to sit rather clothes together wen in comes Master Clarence. E'd been tiffing—that's not fighting, but having lunch and cigars—and was rather flushed in the place. "Mary," ses e, "I want you; Corporal you can go." The Corporal ups and looks at 'im, and in two twos wood ave been into 'im like a 1000 of brick; but I stopd it, for I never could abide fitting, so I give the Corporal a look, as much as to say "meat me in the willer glen" and out he goes without a word.

And then, wot do you think, Master Clarence e begins making love to me, quite beautiful, like the

Marquis does to Rosina in the story; and I really didnt know how to stop im, his langwich was so eloquocious, and full of seminary, e might have been aspeakin to a Dutchies. "Mary," ses e, "this 'ere meatin is quite opera tune, I ave long loved you, and now I must say what I feel, if so be," ses e, "that the tongue will not run out of the Office." "I think you 'ad better go into it," ses I, "you ad not ought to talk to me like that, you no you ad not Master Clarence," ses I; "suppose your Mama wos to know of it?" "Bother er," ses ee (or wurd to that effeck) and then put is arm round may waste, and I believe e give me a kiss or sumthink of the kind when lo and beold yer, hin comes his very Mama, without er speaktakuls. "Corporal," ses she, "I want you to mend me a pen. "Gracious golly," ses she, "what do I see?" And she put on er glasses, "get out of the ouse you hussy." "I will not take that name from henny one mem," ses I, "and you no I am nun." "How dare you to take such a liberry with my sun?" ses she, "no one as any right to do so but myself." Master C. bust out larfin. "No kissing in the house but what you do yourself Mama," ses e, "well that is a good one, and e tuk the old un by the arm and led er away, when they was gone I one it I had a good cri; but wot is a pore gal to do? I wish I knew if either of 'em meant matter o' money, for nuthink else do they get, I wurrant you, from yewers to command.

MARY JANE PATTEN.

15.

*From Peter Simpkin, Esq., Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains,  
to Captain Ardent, London.*

MY DEAR SIR—Your last favour came duly to hand, per which I note your intention to resign the service

and come to this country as agent of a Co. to speculate in land. Referring to what you say about the opposition of the Government and of the members of the Civil Service to the prosperity of Europeans in this country, I take the liberty to note that I think you have been led into a little exaggeration. I recollect when I was in the wine trade, a gentleman belonging to the committee of one of the large west-end clubs came to me, and says he, "Mr. Simpkin, I believe?" "Sir, to you," says I. "I want," says he, "to give you an order for five hundred dozen Spanish and Portuguese wines of sorts. None of your South African stuff," says he, "all wind and water, that blows you up like a balloon, but real good fruity wine that a gentleman can drink a bottle of after dinner to his own cheek; and if he likes to lay it down in his cellars, it will improve every year it's kept."

"Come along," says I, "to the bonded warehouse, and I'll show you some samples that I think had ought to please you;" for, as an upright and downright English tradesman, I scorned to puff my goods. So we got into a cab and drove down to the docks. I got an official to accompany us, and down we went into the vaults, each of us with a kind of long stick in our hands with a light stuck on the end of it. Well, sir, we walked along the dark damp passages, all lined with casks. "No smoking allowed," says the dockyard man to the gentleman, who was lighting a cigar; "but here's a bit of cheese which 'ill help you to taste the wine." So at it he went, first out of one cask, and then out of another, until in about half an hour he was roaring drunk. We took him up into the open air, and there he went right off. I bundled him into a cab, and took him back to the office. Precious ill he was for the better part of an

hour, but some sal-volatile from the chemists set him up a bit ; and the first thing he did was to begin abusing the management of the vaults : “ d——d dark moist caverns,” says he, “ I’ll never go into another as long as I live ; why they’ve nearly been the death of me.” “ Excuse me, sir,” says I, “ but it’s not the fault of the warehouse management. You was taken there to *taste* ; but you drank a matter of two bottles and a half of the purest new wine slap off the reel, before you’d had your luncheon on.” Properly huffed he was, and went away without giving me an order ; and afterwards abused me all over London.

Well, it strikes me, people do much the same when they try to settle in this country. They must have spacious bungalows, and the best of everything to eat and drink ; carriages and horses, perhaps never having ridden anything but the knifeboard of an omnibus in their lives before ; and their ladies dressed out in all the Paris fashions from Madame Gervain ; and some of them get fighting with the zemindars and some with each other ; and when they get into difficulties they abuse the government and the civilians. I saw several planters in Calcutta, and on my way up the country, and some were doing right well ; but those were always those who lived the most prudently, and were on the best terms with the authorities.

It is a tradition of the old times which has unhappily come down to ours. The Court of Directors, when they had India to themselves, were obliged to adopt the maxims of those from whom they had taken over the concern. They had *never conquered* the country, and were obliged to govern without ruling. As a kind of trustee they had to manage the property in the interest of the trusters. Hence, when the interest of Europeans,

or even the spread of Christianity, interfered with the wishes of the people, the former had, necessarily, the worst of it. And hence the young men appointed to writerships, who were naturally connected by birth with the directors or their old servants, were often born in the country, and carefully brought up, when they were taken to England, in the same principles. It was, "Respect the prejudices of the natives, associate freely with them, &c." And this system worked well, for its object, which was the consolidation of British power in the East. The natives looked upon men whom they had known in infancy, and who ruled them in this spirit, as belonging to the country, and went on in their old paths without molestation from Anglo-Saxon enterprise. But such a system could not last, says you. Of course it could not; and therefore first came the Board of Control, and Lord W. Bentinck's reforms; and then the Afghan war, and the extension of our dominions, always opposed by the court and its old civil servants; and then the pampered sepoys and the new generation of agriculturists forgot what had been done for them, and why? And in the fulness of time there was something like a general rebellion, though far short of it if you look at the whole map of India. And now we *have* conquered the country, we have shown our power, and the new times are to begin. Let us give thanks.

You will wonder that my views have changed so rapidly? I think I can explain the reason. When I first landed, I came, in Calcutta, across the extreme members of each party. I found the heads of the civil service and of the administration proud, prejudiced, looking on themselves as the aristocracy of the country, and privileged to do as they liked. I found the natural counteraction among the lawyers, merchants, and planters,

men equally proud, envious of the others' powers. But a considerable number of both, I now find, were mere cocknies, few of whom had ever crossed the Mahratta ditch, or knew anything of the natives beyond the throngs of reprobates who formed the attendants of their homes and their offices. Can you wonder that, fresh from a land of liberty, and knowing nothing of this country, filled with the notion that a principle true for England must be true for all the world, my sympathies were all on the side of the opposition?

But since I left Calcutta, and especially since I have been settled here, I have seen a good deal. I see that the majority of neither class in Calcutta quite understand the people, and I see that the two cries that so confused me there, namely that "the civilians favour the natives," and that "they oppress them," are not only contradictory but, in the main, exaggerated. As to Europeans, they have it very much their own way; there is hardly any law against them, that I can observe; but as they are generally well-educated, prosperous, and well-conducted men, this is less of an evil than might be expected. With the civilians they are generally on very good terms, and the latter are far less "stuck-up" than their brethren in Calcutta. With gentlemen of your cloth, also, they are popular enough, more so, as a general rule, than are the civil servants. When they are not popular with this class, it is chiefly owing to their not going into all your prejudices in favour of the sepoys. I hope you will excuse my freedom when I say that the instances of undisciplined and violent conduct of the native soldiery which I have heard on good authority, have astounded me: and I often found that, so far from their officers punishing them, there has been a tendency to encourage,

or at any rate to shield their *baba logue*, only less strong now than before nine-tenths of the old hands had tried to murder these very officers. Of course there are exceptions, and even in the most glaring cases there has been a generosity of feeling apparent, to an unbiassed observer, in the conduct of the officers, which resembled the stoutness with which, in each corps, they defended the loyalty of their men up to the very time of each outbreak in 1857.

But I was speaking of the civilians. I really feel convinced that they have earned their salt on the whole. In them the government has had a body of intelligent and high-spirited agents, sometimes perhaps a little insubordinate, but always ready to speak the truth, and decide according to their conscience, whether the decision was pleasing to their employers or not; and equally prepared to devote their health, their domestic happiness, or their lives to their views of duty.

Of this latter trait we had abundant instances in the papers during 1857, but they are, as yet, for the most part unrewarded. With regard to their independence, you remember Lord Ellenborough's complaints in the House of Lords. I have heard several anecdotes, illustrative of this failing. When Lord W. Bentinck was on his celebrated tour of inspection, he said to the collector of one district where he was staying, "Is the cash-balance in your chest always exactly as represented in your accounts, Mr. —?" "It must be, my lord," quietly replied Mr. —, "for, you know, I keep the key myself." Still better was the snub he got from an opium agent. "What is your place worth?" said he, "Co.'s Rs. so much per month," says the official. "Pooh, pooh; what do you *make*, I mean?" "Every d——d farthing I can, my lord," says this plain-spoken gent.

The lands here are beautiful. No difficulty in life in getting a tract of a thousand acres on an almost nominal rent for fifty years, of which the first three or four are free. No difficulty, says you, but a degree of delay. This is true, I'll tell you the plan. First you have to send in your application to the deputy commissioner; then he has to see that all is right, and no one in lawful possession of any part of the land; what is the fair rate of rental; and so forth. So far, so good; and it puzzles a plain man to know what more is required for the interests of individuals or of the state. But not to "the system." Your application then goes up from the district officer with a full report to the commissioner, who knows nothing of the matter, and often sends back the report for explanation because he can't understand it. Then it goes up to government, and after about a year's correspondence you get exactly what the district officer recommended at first.

It is now proposed, and this would settle all hitches, that a list of lots of waste land should be submitted from each district to government with a note of the fair upset-price of each: and that on a certain date, announced in all the local newspapers, and otherwise proclaimed to the native community, a public auction should be held of such lots or estates as the government have determined to sell; the collector delivering to the highest bidder for each, above the upset price—a full, clear, and permanent title to the fee-simple of the land. Will this suit your book?

The young folks are out at a pic-nic; and Mrs. S. is gone to church, it being a saint's day, and she very fashionably high church. Master Clarence is running through a sight of money; but he spends it like a gentleman, keeping the best of company. Major Busby,



and Captain Shabrack, and the honourable Dolman of the Hussars are all as thick as thieves with him; and pay the greatest of attention to Heloise. The silly boy rode against Lieutenant Scamperham of the company's artillery on the Mall last week, and then sent Dolman to challenge him, but the duel was prevented, and I dare say some of them will write you an account of the affair. And so rest, for self and partner,

Yours faithfully,

P. SIMPKIN.

16.

*From Miss Mary Jane Patten, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, to Miss Rosherville, London.*

MR. Clarens is as bad as that Jon my deer, which it were the wine that were in him, and not him as spoke me so prity when I rit you last. Sins then mut I be kist if e ave so much as lookt at me, though I ave run after im with the close brush hever so menney timbs, wen e ave been goin out (they most allus kisses of yer wen yer go for to brush them). The wust is *the Corporal ave cride hoff tu*, sich is men. Hi bleeve them blax as told im sumthink; the kidmay guards, watermen, or other beasties is continually a spyin about. And their lise is orful, or wort Missus cawls their mendicity, tho if the sossiaty as give tickets for soup gits as many tolde them no wonder they gets cross to the pore, and waters their grewel. And I didn't ought to forgit to tell yer about the feestis they makes, with they call Tommy Shaws. Y is best knowen to themselves. Then they walk with tom-toms, which is a kind of Tommy Shaw and bambooze in their ands. (I'd bamboozle them,) and

throwing pink dirt over you wich it takes a site of soap and water and scrubbin I do ashure you, to get off again. Then the survints as a holiday, and you get nothink to heat amost, and they gits joly drunk ; but so does their masters too sumtimbs wich mum's the word.

And these nasty great blak he fellers calls themselves Bobberjees wich is wot we calls cooks, but ho, their ways is worriting, and sumtimes they plays old gusebury with the puddens and jellies wich they strained wun last weak through Missus nite cap, and when I tort them to make a sooflay and it riz, wot does they do but go and thumped it with a spun till sich time as it all fell plump, and that way they put it on the table and said it was Sating's pudden and madgik, and they wood nut make it no moor.

Hi pheel like Mary Hanne in the moted grains amongst em, specially now the Corpral is gon, 4 bein a gentleman hisself e thort Master Clarens wasn't after no good, and woodunt stand is goins on, nor more woodunt I if I ad a knone wot it wud end in

E ave been a cutting of it phat along with a gall ere, that all the gents is a runnin after, tho I don't see wot her buty lies in, and her Eyeya ses she paints and dies her hare. This ere is a blak woman but as been to Lundon and nose a little English and we as torks which I tells them again to Miss Helloease. She aint a great friend of this *butifle* creecher I warrant yer, tho you wud think so if you sor them meat. Er name is Miss Steelart, and she is twenty-six if she's a day, with horbin are *wen she comes out*, wich she wares it in ring-luts, and looks at the men o mi so owdacious. There has been jewels fout for er, and she wears all sorts of rings and bracerlits, *for she never returns a present* wen she breaks orf with a gent, as she most allus dose in ten

days. But bless yer they goes on a buzzing rounder like buggs round a lamp, and don't a lot of em git burnt that's all.

Master Clarens is fust favourite now, but his week is over, and is time will cumb I no. She thinks e as no end of money, but I no better, for the Corpral told me is old Master ad investigated awl his money in Tea (wot a site of it e must a bought!) and so Mr. C. is gone to pott, and pritty wel up the spowt.

Tell Capting Hardunt, if you can see im, that Miss H. is a carrion of it too with a duzzen or so. I dont't think e need be afeared yet, but there is a hawful andsum officerser with mousestarch a yard long wich is dredfull spooney, and Miss H. is one of those beauties as is drawd on by a site of hair as Shikspere says in Pope Joan.

So, oping you are quite wel, I remane yewers to come and

MARY JANE P.

17.

*From Captain Racketts, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains,  
to Captain Ardent, London.*

MY DEAR ARDENT—You told me that you would like, from time to time, to hear about the proceedings of the Simpkins. It is a long story, but I will make it as short as I can. The family have developed amazingly since they came out. They all stand ever so much higher (in their own estimation) than when they were griffs in Calcutta. So high, indeed, that I feel my own influence over them every day decreasing. They actually pretend to know as much about the country, and

things in general, as myself—I, with varied experience of the world as it is, and more especially, perhaps, of the world as it ought not to be. The old gentleman, from a firm believer in the beauties of the native character and the oppression of the European power, has changed to a stern admirer of the British rule as conducted under the old Company. The most perfect system of governing this country, he considers, is a despotism tempered by humbug—that is to say you are to check the native at every turn, take all power away from him, but make him believe that you are his best friend, and are protecting him from his natural enemies, the free public and the constitutional government at home.

This was the old code, as you know, and it answered wonderfully well while it lasted. The worst of it was—as far as certain interests were concerned—that it didn't last longer.

But old Simpkins always was a radical and always will be. Had the old Company endured he would have been its devoted enemy to command. Now that the old Company is no more he does nothing but discover its virtues; and I verily believe that if his *cara sposa*, with whom he quarrels now about three times a day, were to depart this life, he would find out all on a sudden that she was the most perfect specimen of a British wife and mother that ever snubbed a husband or interfered with the flirtations of a daughter. But it is a respectable thing here to stand up for the old Company. Directly a man gets land I always find that his views of life change immensely. Old Simpkin has got land upon some sort of tenure already, and it is whispered that one of these days he will be allowed to hold it in fee-simple, and has become one of the real aristocracy of the soil.

With this prospect his ideas are fast enlarging, and I really believe that you might soon persuade him that the land has been in the family for generations past, and that Crutched Friars and the wine trade are nothing but a dream. The other day, after tippin, he talked about representing the county, and adverting to young Clarence's extravagances—of which he is perhaps just a little proud—he said that it was very comforting to his feelings to know that the property was entailed. However, he is really making something of his investment by planting tea, which is a capital speculation, so that you allow it time to *draw*. I use his own simile, taken from the breakfast table, which he employed rather forcibly the other day to the wife of his bosom. That lady was holding forth—with that kind of practical good sense which consists of believing in nothing more than you can see of an encouraging kind, and using all your foresight to anticipate disaster—upon the fortunes of the family, which she considered to be at a ruinously low ebb. Everything was going out and nothing coming in, according to her account. To say nothing of Clarence's goings on—though she forgave that for the dear boy's sake—and Heloise's unhappy way of not being able to fix an admirer for more than a fortnight—she thought that her husband was imperilling the prospects of the family by speculations of a wild, not to say *reckless*, character. It was all very well in the old days, when he bought largely of a particular vintage. He had the wine safe in the docks. If he did not sell it he knew that it was getting better for keeping, and he had no duty to pay in the meantime. But it was quite a different thing with tea. He put the seed in the ground, and then there was, for ever so long, nothing but money out of pocket, for no other purpose

than to keep it there—not the money but the seed. She had never seen anything come of this tea, and she didn't expect she ever would ; and what was to become of them all she should very much like to know ?

Our respectable friend Simpkin, I must say to his credit, listened to these complaints with most respectful attention ; and then, with an oracular manner which he has lately assumed with some success, he addressed the wife of his bosom as follows :—

“My dear Mary (Mrs. Simpkin, you remember, was christened in days before Heloises were invented), I am afraid that you do not do me justice in this matter. What would you say if I was to undertake to prepare our breakfast beverage one morning, and after putting in the requisite number of spoonfuls, was to deluge it with hot water, and pour it forth at once into the cups without giving it time to *stand* ? You would say, I think,—and justly,—that I was wasting the resources of the household, leaving the strength all in the teapot, and giving the breakfast party a miserable beverage—all because I lacked the patience to wait. My dear, this is exactly what too many persons do in this country when engaged in commercial speculation. They pour out their business before it is strong enough. Now, of all other commercial speculations, tea is exactly the one which will not admit of the practice. It requires to be kept a long time in the pot—so to speak—before it has drawn sufficiently to realize. I am not exaggerating when I say that three years is necessary for the purpose ; but after that period it keeps developing, and the brew that it produces is marvellous for its strength and quantity.”

This strongly personal argument appeared to satisfy the lady to whom it was addressed ; and Simpkin, you

know, is quite right—thanks of course to my training—and I am very glad to say that I have a small share in his business without having had any money to put down, which is not very wonderful considering that I never had any money to put up.

Clarence Simpkin, I am sorry to say, does not take to tea, and there is only one branch of agriculture for which he seems to have any aptitude. This is one in which people are never in a hurry to realize. Indeed whenever the crop comes up the period is generally considered too soon. Of course I mean wild oats. This year we have had racing down in the valley, and our young friend has been more than ever conspicuous in the sporting world. But, as is the case with a great many young sportsmen, especially those who are their own jockeys, he pays more attention to his boots than his book, and his horses, which have a tremendous reputation in the stable, always manage to break down on the course. But he is happy, and so long as cash or credit last, will continue to be so. He has a great idea that he is destined one day to marry a large fortune, and so settle his debts and himself at the same time. So, impressed with the belief that faint heart never won fair lady, and that a wife, though not always to be had for asking, is most certainly not to be had without, he casts a line into almost every female fishery that he comes across; and even his written matrimonial proposals (on the chance of money, though I am bound to say that when the lady is particularly pleasing he is very apt to give her the benefit of the doubt) would be sufficient to line the trunks of all the newly married couples from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin for the next ten years to come. Fortunately for him either the ladies or their families usually give him his *jawab*, either thinking he

is "only in fun," or objecting to the state of his exchequer. Of course he is in an occasional row, either through being refused or being accepted, the latter being the more embarrassing position of the two; for it has always happened that when successful, there are very good reasons why he should not follow up his success.

The state and prospects of Miss Heloise are less easy to describe; for it would be really very difficult to guess what are her intentions in the course of life to which she appears to have given herself up. Everybody agrees that she is a wonderfully fine girl, and she is certainly a celebrity here. She dresses, dances, and rides, to the admiration of the one sex and the envy of the other; has about three offers a week during the season, and might have been married over and over again had she so chosen. Her worthy parents, not very acute in such matters, fancy that she fails to "fix" her admirers, but this is by no means the case; and my own impression is that she has some love that she has never told, though it cannot be said that she lets concealment play any poetical pranks with her complexion. However, whether her object be to forget or to remember, she succeeds most completely in diverting suspicion from the reality, and in the meantime in diverting herself to a very considerable extent indeed. It is under her leadership that the spinsters—or "spins" as they are still termed by irreverent youth—have succeeded in emancipating themselves this season from parental control, give parties without any reference to papa and mamma, and even moonlight pic-nics from which all married persons and chaperons are rigorously excluded. I hear you are writing "a novel of Indian Society." If so you must take care not to mention this little matter; as people here are furious



at anything like "drawing the veil from the sanctity of private life," and most uncomfortably touchy at the "libels upon Indians" circulated by some writers at home. At any rate, if you do, don't give me as your authority, or I shall be eaten up alive. I must confess though that I cannot see why Indians should be so sensitive upon the score of satire, considering how little mercy society at home receives from novelists and fast writers. And after all, half the scandals that occur here are as much a reproach to England as to India. If anything goes wrong with people who have spent their lives in this country, of course England has nothing to do with it; but the majority of persons are continually passing backwards and forwards; and, especially when people fresh out from home misconduct themselves, I see no reason on earth for fixing the obloquy upon India any more than upon Dublin or Dover, or any other place where they may happen to be quartered. However, I will not, as the lady says in the comedy, begin to moralize, and forget that I am among friends.

Among the Simpkin family the member—if I may so call her—who has made most progress is Miss Simpkin's maid. She has had her little sentimental trials like her mistress, and at one time was content to form a lowly alliance in the barracks. But a tropical sun is peculiarly favourable to the plant called ambition, and her views have undergone a forcing process which has increased their growth immensely. She will not now look at a non-commissioned officer or a clerk, and woe be to the ensign who has the "imperance" to address her. I believe she has determined to marry nobody under the rank of a judge or a general—and, considering some recent examples, she need not quite despair of getting

one or the other. Generals indeed are so plentiful up here that "nobody in particular—only a general," has become a familiar saying in funny circles of society. Mary Jane too, I am bound to say, has improved greatly in person and deportment, and an educational course gained by glimpses of good manners and much reading of novels, is doing wonders for her.

For myself I still continue to enjoy good health and sick leave, and flatter myself that I shall not be ordered back to my regiment until I get a staff appointment which will take me away from it altogether. If not I am sufficiently high up on the list of captains to be worth buying out. I suppose your three years are nearly up, and that we shall see you out here one of these days. I forget where your regiment is just now, but as you have hitherto made a point of not being with it, I conclude that you are not going to change your plans at this time of day. I hear that you are employing all your energies while at home in "developing the resources" of India; that you are developing your own resources also is the sincere wish of

Your faithful friend,

J. R.

18.

*From Mrs. Simpkin, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, India,  
to Miss Grimalkin, Boulogne, sur-mer, France, near  
England.*

MY DEAR SISTER—At last we have got over the worry of this long journey, which has been nearly too much for me, and are settled down in a place where we may unpack our things with a prospect of being able to

keep them in chests of drawers instead of trunks for some time to come. It would make you cry with vexation to see the ruination that has been going on in our clothes since we came to this country. My best things are all moth eaten, or covered with a crust made by the white ants ; all the linen, except what has been lost—and that may be just as bad, and I hope it is,—is in holes, done in the washing, and the mending necessary would take a whole winter of long evenings. However, I will not trouble you with these matters. I hope you are more content with your single blessedness than you used to be, for I don't suppose you are likely to do anything in the shape of a match among the disreputable people you have chosen to go and live among. I don't know the place, except by passing through it, and don't want to, that's more ; and I think that, though younger than me, you are old enough to know better than to have anything to do with it. But I suppose you still expect to meet with what you call a "congenial soul," though, as Clarence says, he is most likely to turn up in the shape of a French officer with nothing to do but to rattle five sous in a pair of preposterous pantaloons. But just as you like ; whatever you do won't make much difference to us out here, as I suppose it is not very probable that any of us will ever see you again. We are not likely to return to London in a hurry, and I suppose you have no idea of trying your chances out here—which, indeed, I would not advise you to do, as there are no chances to try, as far as *you* are concerned.

Our affairs are very promising. Simpkin turns out not such a fool after all. •Travel, or something else, has brightened him up. And really a great deal of what I used to consider mere speechifying on his part, turns

out to be very good sense. At any rate his ideas have not ruined us as yet, as I fully expected they would. He has got a very good estate, and tea coming up on it which is better than I used to give seven shillings a pound for in England, and so strong as to bear almost any amount of water. He will soon begin to make money very fast. Clarence, too, is going to marry an heiress, only he hasn't found one to have him yet, and meantime, though he is rather expensive, and borrows a great deal of money from the housekeeping of me, unknown to his father, he is quite a credit to the family, going about as he does with all the *young bloods*, and *sprigs of aristocracy*, who abound here, and are not in the least proud, as we used to think in England that they were, only we didn't know any, except that young *honourable* who owed Simpkin so much money for wine, and who always dropped in to dine with us *in a friendly way* whenever his bill had been sent in. But this is neither here nor there, and it isn't my fault if Simpkin was so weak as to lend him money besides, and lose every farthing of it when the young man became insolvent.

Heloise also is carrying on in a manner that makes us proud, because it is just the way to get herself well married, which is of course the great object of a parent's life, as you would know if you could by any possibility find yourself in that position. She has already had several offers, but nothing has come of them. I think this time, however, she is all right. Her present admirer is none of your young fools who never have any money, but a man at a reputable period of life—almost as old as Simpkin—and a major-general in the army—though having no duty to do, being in a corps called the *Inválids*, where officers go for the benefit of their health, and

indeed this kind of service does seem to restore them wonderfully.

The general is here morning, noon, and night, and nothing can be more devoted than his demeanour. To me he is always respectful and attentive, as befits a person in the position which he will possibly assume towards me. Indeed he devotes more of his time to me, perhaps, than to my daughter, which is quite the style, you know, of the *old régime*, a country you are aware in which *young ladies* were made to keep their place until they got married, when I suppose they did much as they like, as they do now. But never for a moment has there been anything in his manner which could lead me to doubt the direction of his advances. And Heloise, as if already aware of his sentiments, is so frank and confiding with him that, I more than ever congratulate myself upon the excellence of her education, which has given her such good sense. It is true that she does flirt not a little with other gentlemen, but that is such a common thing here as to be scarcely deserving of notice—and what does it matter, after all, so that the general does not mind it, and she gives him proper encouragement? The general, I should have told you before, is immensely rich, or at any rate *has the reputation* of being so; for besides the *pay of his rank*, he has laid by a great deal, and has investments in many mercantile speculations. He is quite a man of business in fact, and as such has gained the confidence of Peter in no small degree. He is rather advanced in years, as I hinted to you, but that is no objection among the aristocracy where we *now* live, and move, and have our being. Besides it is not his fault if he has passed so many years before meeting with an object worthy to fix his affections. I am sure *I* was long enough, as you all

used to remark, before I met Simpkin, and *you*—but I will not further allude to what *by this time* must be a painful subject. Besides, no man can be more anxious than he is to make up for any little ravages that time has been able to inflict. He is a little stout, perhaps, to appear to advantage in a shell jacket—which he still insists upon wearing in the evening—but he assures me that he is *bringing himself down* rapidly with claret—a very reducing wine in this country, especially when you take a great deal of it, as some people do. His hair is getting thin on the top of his head, but it still retains its colour, as well as his whiskers and moustache, which may be attributable to a native preparation which he gets from his barber, for his servant told my (native) maid, who told me, that about once in ten days or so he always has some mysterious stuff applied to it, and goes about for half the day with his face tied up in leaves. If this be so, all the more to his credit, say I. It shows a proper respect for my daughter, which her mother should be the last person to complain of. I think it also a great mark of attention that he has sent to Calcutta for some new teeth, with regard to which, however, he was cruelly served. The travelling agent of a dentist in that city came up here, after a great flourish in the up-country papers for a month before of his intended visit. He put up at the hotel, and sent bills all over the place to say that he would stay only a fortnight, and was ready to attend to anybody's teeth in the meantime. As such an opportunity seldom occurs but once in the season, everybody who had, or fancied they had, anything the matter with their teeth, went to him at once, and among them the dear old general. The dentist began by condemning eleven of the front teeth, top and bottom, and the general consented to have new ones

put in. He was quite in spirits at the idea, and when the dentist offered to draw the old ones of course made no objection. But when the old ones were drawn there came no new ones to put in, and then the wretch said, that they must be made in Calcutta. So there was the poor general left without his teeth, while the order was despatched to a distance of twelve thousand miles. But this was not all. In three weeks time, when the teeth were declared to be ready (the dentist having in the meantime departed on his tour) the firm wrote to demand the money in advance, and such a preposterous price they charged you can't think! About six times as much as the things could be got for by anybody on the spot! But they had their customer in their power, and were determined to make the most of him. The general, who to do him justice, never likes parting with his money, wrote and remonstrated, but the delay was too much for him to endure. He soon paid the amount, and got the teeth very punctually. They made him look beautiful—so white under his black moustache—though they whistled a little when he talked, and wicked people used to laugh, and say that he ought to have them put into tune now and then, like a musical instrument. I mention this incident as a warning to you my dear sister—your teeth I remember were fast going when I was in England—never to allow any practitioner to take away a *single tooth* unless he shows that he has another to put in its place, and always to agree upon the price beforehand. But it is a long time before one becomes a match for all the tricks one is exposed to in this country, especially from Europeans, who are rather worse than the natives in this respect.

I am not much given to letter-writing, so I hope you will excuse a short epistle. When you answer this,

send me some French fashions, and especially patterns that I can have made up here. We have several milliners in this place, who sell everything by the way—including wine, brandy, and cigars, without which articles of commerce nobody would think of opening a shop, or “store,” as it is called here—of any description. I am always suspicious therefore of the Paris goods, and fancy the last batch of bonnets is not of what Peter calls the right “brand.” Yet nothing is to be got in that way under five pounds. Sleeves I see are not so tight as they were. Peter says he wishes he could say the same of the money market.

Your affectionate sister,  
M. T.

## 19.

*From Clarence Simpink, Esq., Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, to Adolphus Sparks, Esq., London.*

DEAR A.—This comes hoping that you are a great deal less hard up than it leaves me at present. I am sorry to say that I have nearly come to the end of my pecuniary tether, and must soon either marry or smash. The former alternative is not half so easy as I supposed, that is to say, if money be the object; for India is a place where women make an absurd stand upon their own merits, and heiresses are things only read of in books. The governor’s allowance, though not illiberal, is a mere drop in the ocean. It has been anticipated over and over again, and goes as soon as received in paying off loans to the banks. The loan arrangement is a very delightful one until you have to pay. Nothing can be more easy than getting the money. Any three of us are quite sufficient. Let us say that Captain



Shabrack, the Hon. Dolman, and myself, all happen to want money at the same time, which not unfrequently happens. The banks will always lend it on our joint names, two of us being security for the third, who is the nominal borrower. The money is forthcoming almost immediately, but it has to be paid back in monthly instalments. If one can't meet these, another must, and if neither of us can, the thing of course becomes a bore. However, I have carried through tolerably well as yet, and in fifteen or sixteen years, if I could go on paying, should be quite clear. My object in the meantime is to marry, as I have told you, and I suppose I shall do so in the long run, only if I could manage to do it in the short run it would be much more convenient.

But I will not now bore you with my own affairs, preferring to give you some news of my people here. Compared with me everybody is in a flourishing condition. The governor is really making a good thing of tea, and mamma is in a high state of dignity and satisfaction at the importance of the position which he has gained, which she assures us is all through his having taken her advice. My only fear is for Heloise. She is really a most creditable person to have for a sister, and ought to make a first-rate match. But I must confess I am not satisfied with the match that appears in prospect. The *pretender* at present is an old general (Major-general Haggles of the Invalids) a man with scarcely a tooth in his head, except those for which he is indebted to the dentist, (not in a pecuniary sense, however, for to keep his mouth in commission he was made to pay through the nose) and with rich purple whiskers, for which he is indebted to native science. Haggles is old, but that is not the worst of it. He is an old screw. Not being

in active service, he can do much as he likes in the way of trading, and he likes to do very shy things sometimes. He buys houses, right and left, and he owns, I believe, the racket court, the assembly rooms, the theatre, every public subscription place he can lay his hands upon, and I should not be at all surprised to hear one day that he had bought up the club. As it is, he has nearly everybody in the station "on his books," and is as particular in getting his money in as the most grasping *sadawga*. He holds shares, I believe, in every bank in the country, and can do things in horses which would astonish your weak nerves. What with one investment and the other he is always down upon somebody, and getting fellows into scrapes. He has been the cause of no end of courts martial, and generally smashes his man; for it is really difficult to keep within the vexatious limits necessary for the "character of an officer and a gentleman," in one's dealings with him. There are always at least six rows in a season, of which he is directly or indirectly the cause. Of course he is rolling in rupees, and in this respect would be a most desirable match; but I can't fancy selling my sister to him for all that. Nor would I give my consent to any proceeding of the kind, notwithstanding the evident bias of papa and mamma in his favour, but for one little circumstance which takes the wind out of my sails. Heloise appears not at all averse to him. Indeed she favours him decidedly. What the deuce then am I to do, except be disgusted and hold my tongue? I would borrow money of him of course by way of revenge; but unfortunately two parties are always necessary to pecuniary transactions, and although I would willingly be one, nothing is more certain than the fact that he would not be the other. Moreover he does not like me on

general grounds. I belong to a set—Shabrack, Dolman, Busby, and the rest—who are always badgering him, and writing squibs about him in the local journals; and I know he suspects me of the authorship of that last thing in the Meerut paper, in which he was trotted out in a merciless manner. The fact is that the verses in question were written by a certain *burra beebie*, or great lady, who happened to be here, assisted by one of her husband's aide-de-camps.

This writing to the papers, by the way, is capital fun, so long as you have them on your own side. Nearly everybody does it; and this being the case, I don't think it quite fair for those who get hit a little hard now and then, to write home and complain of the "personalities of the Indian press." The papers in India—the provincial ones more especially—are mainly dependant upon their correspondents for news, which is a commodity not to be purchased as in England. These correspondents are of every class: government house and head quarter's people sometimes; judges, generals, officers, civil and military of all ranks, down to *kerances* or clerks, *et hoc genus omne*. You may be sure that these people do not communicate intelligence without having their fling more or less upon the subjects which it suggests. The consequence is, that public men being tolerably well known, personally, to the public, the discussions occasionally get a great deal too familiar; but after all very little bad feeling is shown, and not worse taste, even upon trying occasions, than is occasionally manifested by the press at home. Some people say that the editors ought to resist this tendency on the part of the Indian public. What the editors say is that when they do nobody thanks them; those who applaud their endeavours give them but cold support, while the

majority denounce their squeamishness as mere milk and water cant that can come to no good. There is only one paper in the country which systematically rejects original gossip, and this is a weekly publication which is not read for current news, though it carefully collects whatever is interesting from its contemporaries. But although it does not collect current news of an ordinary character, it has an old-established reputation for exclusive official intelligence which people have learned to look for in its columns; so that, apart from the ability with which it has generally been conducted, the special advantages which it enjoys remove it from the ordinary category. In spite of all difficulties, however, the "tone" of the Indian press has greatly improved of late years, since the form of government has become popularized and the governors have become reconciled to a little publicity; and now that Englishmen are crowding into India on all sides, and the resources of the country are really being developed, we may expect a still further improvement. The fact is, when the Indian papers have enough of public matters, in which the interests of the majority of their readers are concerned, to occupy them, they will neither have time nor inclination for the discussion of less important and more personal topics. All this, you should understand, comes from the governor. I don't trouble myself much about such matters, and never read the papers unless I hear that somebody is being squibbed or abused. But the governor was discussing the subject with the old general the other day, and I thought what he said was quite just, and so give you the benefit of it.

You should have been here at the races the other day down in the Doon: the course is the prettiest in the world, surrounded by an ampitheatre of hills which

give it, as the ladies declare, *quite* a romantic appearance. There is, of course, a Grand Stand and all the rest of the business. The sporting world mustered this year in great force, and included some of the best racing men going, of whom I will only mention —— of the Hussars and —— of the Dragoon Guards. The horseflesh was of a highly creditable character, and the running was generally first chop. A great deal of money changed hands as usual, but none of it, as usual, found its way into mine. I ran one horse which I had just bought and not paid for; he was a beautiful fellow, but broke down disastrously at the last moment. I had set all my hopes, and what is worse—made up my book, on the chance of his winning, as I don't see the fun of running a horse without backing him, especially when one has bought him on purpose. However, but for the money it would be almost as much fun losing as winning—the excitement, indeed, in the former case is greater; and after all excitement is the great object of sport. Looking at the matter in that light, therefore, I may be considered to have come off a winner to a considerable extent. I thought the preparations for the racing, too, almost as good as the racing itself. Nearly all the sporting world turned out every morning at five o'clock to see the exercising round the course, and from seven to eight there was a general gathering at the bungalow of a man who hung out “doctors.” Don't suppose for an instant that he suspended medical practitioners before his gates; I merely mean that he supplied a refreshment which is called by that name on account of its sustaining qualities. A great scene it was as you may imagine:—the compound or enclosure in which the bungalow stands filled with horses and tats, all held by the native grooms, while the riders

mustered under the verandah, where a long table was spread dedicated to the "doctors." Ranged at intervals along the table were huge punch-bowls, borrowed from the hotel, and dishes full of innumerable eggs, also large jugs of fresh milk, and bottles of brandy and sherry. There were a dozen men employed in making the doctors, and this is how they set about it:—To make one big bowl of the stuff you take, say, twenty eggs, separate the yolks carefully from the whites, and while one fellow beats the former well together another fellow beats the latter still better together, that is to say, until the white becomes a complete froth and as solid as snow; the yolks are then poured into the bowl, with a certain proportion of pounded loaf sugar and glasses of brandy or sherry according to taste. The bowl is then nearly filled with the fresh (goat's) milk, and to crown the concoction the froth is added, which gives to the whole very much the appearance of the snowy range of the Himalayas, especially when lit up by the slanting rays of the early sun, which is apt in India to intrude into even the best regulated verandahs. The compound is then ladled out into tumblers, and drunk at discretion if not always with it. Its effect, after a gallop in the morning air, or without the gallop, for men are not particular one way or other, is most invigorating, and it is generally considered that if this kind of doctor does not set a man up it is of no use to call in another. To fellows who have been "up" the night before it is especially recommended, and as most of the fellows had, its appropriateness was very general. After a dose or two from the above prescription, he must be difficult to please indeed who has not a happy canter back again to his bath and his breakfast.

Going to the races in India is not very much like

going to the races at home. To "our" race course in the Doon people turned up from different directions, so that there was no thronged road, and no "chaff" of the promiscuous passenger. All the Mussoorieites who were able had come "down the hill" a few days before, and the hotel and every accessible private house were full to the ceiling. But of course a large number came down only just in time, and so swelled the crowd with new faces; and some of us of course gave a description of them in our reports to the north-west papers, not as they were, proceeding on tats or in *jam-pans*, but as they ought to be, in the style of *Bell's Life*. "From the first appearance of bright Phœbus, that early-rising god," said one of these veracious chronicles, "the road from Mussoorie to the race-course was literally blocked up with every description of vehicle. From the sporting drag covered with tip-top swells, and drawn by four spanking tits, to the Hansom cab of the solitary fast-man who had lost his party; from the nobleman's barouche, with its fair occupants, and hampers suggestive of Fortnum and Mason, to the donkey cart of the sporting costermonger, every class of society, and every description of vehicle was represented by the hundred; and of course, as there was no Cock at Sutton, there was a general stoppage for refreshment at the half-way house of the hospitable beak,"—and so forth, in a strain of facetiousness which you may easily imagine. The "hospitable beak" referred to was the magistrate of the district, who of course had a house full on the occasion, and who was the owner of one of the winning horses.

It was really a brilliant scene, the ground at four o'clock in the day, when the sun was bright without being hot, and tiffin being over, we were bright without

being hungry. The grand stand was packed with ladies, as you may suppose, and all people acquainted with one another; for the races are after all a regular family arrangement, got up for our own amusement, without any regard to the public. Even the jockeys were men of the set, all gentlemen riders of course, and great fun they made of their riding sometimes. There were several first-rate jockeys among them, and I am bound to say that no bad ones mounted at all; but one or two spoiled their chances by taking too much lobster salad at tiffin, which made them uncertain in their saddles. One fellow, in a cavalry regiment not uncelebrated in Europe, made himself particularly conspicuous by his insane mode of managing matters. He was really too far gone to be trusted, and would not have been trusted at all, only he rode his own horse, and insisted upon trusting himself. So in he went, for a hurdle race, leaving his property, consisting principally of horses, rifles, and a balance of five rupees twelve annas, which he believed he had with his agents, to his friends before he started, as he said he didn't expect to come out of the business alive, and had only one wish associated with existence, which was, to dine with the fellows at the club in the evening. Fortunately his worst fears were not realized, for he came down at the second hurdle, not on the same side with his horse, which went off somewhere in the direction of Caubul, and was picked up as brisk as a bee, to dine at the club according to his desire, and enjoy himself to his heart's content.

After the regular races there were several of an irregular character, such as that for the "cheroot stakes," in which the riders all smoked, and were not held to win unless they kept alight; and another, in which



they appeared in ladies' bonnets, and carrying parasols. This kind of thing gave an agreeable diversity to the proceedings, and brought the evening to a brilliant close. Of course the sport was carried on for the regular number of days, and each was considered better than the preceding. The ordinary was held in a tent, in the compound of the hotel, and the lotteries were rare fun, and distinguished by an amount of speculation such as it would do your heart good to behold. I always drew the wrong horses, but enjoyed myself nevertheless, as I always do. Next year I hope to have better luck, but can scarcely expect to have more amusement. Give my love to all the fellows who ask after me, except Scimp the tailor: if *he* does, say you think I have gone to Australia. There was a little balance against me in his books, which I didn't like to mention to the governor before I left England.

Your sincere friend,  
C. S.

20.

*From Mrs. Simpkin, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, Asia,  
to Miss Grimalkin, Boulogne sur Mer, Europe.*

MY DEAR SISTER—I write to tell you of a shameful humiliation to which we have been subjected. That Mary Jane, whom we brought out with us, has done nothing but give herself stuck up airs ever since she came to this country. From first to last her course has been nothing but one of increased assumption. First she left off caps, I didn't much mind that, especially considering the heat. Then she took to dressing herself in an unbecoming manner, that is to say, as much like me and Heloise as her income would permit, and this

not being enough for her purpose she struck for more. Well, we raised her wages; and even this I did not think very unreasonable in a country where *even trades-people* keep carriages, and drink champagne. But would you believe it? After this she refused to dress either me or Heloise, declaring that she would no longer act as a *menial servant*; so we had to content ourselves with a couple of native women in her place, who were always smoking hookahs in the cook-room when they were wanted, and who cleaned themselves for the afternoon by rubbing themselves over with cocoa-nut oil—the effect upon the nose being such that “smell” was no name for it. Mary Jane then took up a position as a kind of companion or housekeeper, and performed her duties by shutting herself up in her own room away from everybody, and leaving the house to keep itself. All this was very exasperating, but she had been so long in the family, that neither Simpkin nor myself had the heart to get rid of her, and so she has stayed on ever since, more like a friend or relation than anything else. Since we have been up in the hills her conduct has grown more and more unbearable, and if our family were *inferior people*, depending upon her for our subsistence, she could scarcely conduct herself more haughtily. First of all she annoyed us very much by her *goings on* with men, and I told her once that like too many girls of her age, she was *men-mad*. She has grown more particular, however, of late; has thrown over all her friends in *low life*; and has been very quiet under the evident impression that she would make a *great match*. And the minx has not been so far out after all, for, what do you think? I told you all about the old general, who was paying attention to Heloise. I found her yesterday out walking with him in a most

loving manner: they had been on an excursion, had had lunch together, and when I saw them from my *jampan* they had dismissed their bearers, and were walking home arm in arm, in the most brazen manner possible. Of course I stopped and confronted them, and what do you think the hussey did, but laughed in my face, said that it was all arranged with the general, they were going to be married that day week, and should not fail to send me cards. Not trusting myself even to look at the creature, I turned to the general, who had always conducted himself in a *most perfectly gentlemanlike* manner to me, and from whom I expected at any rate the courtesy due to a *British mother-in-law* that was expected to be. And to do him justice, he was not at all offensive in his manner, though I thought there was something mocking in his style, when he said: "My dear madam, I must ask your pardon for this little *ruse*; all is fair you know in love and war. I must now confess that the object which I had—apart from the pleasure of the society of your family, which I hope I shall always enjoy—was to make the acquaintance of your friend [my friend indeed!] Miss Patten. In this object I have succeeded, and so well, that this estimable young lady has this day consented to be my partner for life, I sincerely trust with your concurrence, and that of my worthy friend Simpkin."

This was too much for my temper, which a hot climate makes irritable sometimes.

"And how about my daughter, Sir?" I asked, "my daughter, whose feelings you have trifled with for this month past, and who has before her nothing but a future of sorrow and humiliation, for which there can be no adequate compensation, pecuniary or otherwise." I took these last expressions from the speech of a

counsel in a breach of promise case which I had been reading in the morning, and thought they would do very well, although nothing had been said about compensation as yet. But it seemed that my sagacity was to be of no avail.

"As regards Miss Simpkin," said the general with a smile, in which I could not but see the minx at his side was more than half-disposed to join, "You need be under no fear; that young lady has been in my secret all along. She frankly told me that my attentions to her would be mere waste of time, and upon my making her acquainted with the real direction of my affections, she entered readily into the little plot, and I am certain will be very sorry to find that by so doing she has incurred your displeasure."

What was I to answer to this? I scarcely knew what I said. I know I left them to continue their walk, and told my bearers to take me home as fast as they could. Peter was fortunately in the verandah, sitting in a rocking chair, smoking a cheroot and reading the newspaper. Would you believe it? He laughed when I told him about my discovery, of the perfidy of which we had been made the victim. "It is our own fault," he said, "for desiring a son-in-law nearly as old as ourselves, and we have been very properly punished. And after all the general is much better mated, if he must have a young wife, with a girl like Mary Jane, who will feel herself honoured by the alliance, and bear with all his old Indian eccentricities, than with one like Heloise, who would expect him to make an appearance in society where one can but see he would be out of place."

Well, Peter has proved himself so sound in judgment in many ways of late, quite contrary to my expecta-

tions, that I thought I would give him the benefit of the doubt in the present case. Besides, as he very truly said—what was to be done in the matter? We could not pretend that Heloise had been trifled with, and by making any noise on the subject we should only get ourselves laughed at. So what did we do but go into the house, and finding Heloise in the drawing room (after reproaching her *just a little* for her undutiful conduct) concocted, with her assistance, a note to the general, in which we said that we were delighted to hear of his engagement, and hoped that he would accompany Mary Jane back to dinner at eight o'clock. We sent off the note immediately by a chuprassy, and received, in half an hour, a "*bohut, bohut salaam,*" which, under the circumstances, might be understood to mean that he would come. Mary Jane had returned in the meantime, and had barricaded the room for fear of consequences. Heloise went to explain matters to her, and soon afterwards we heard the general's pony bounding up the steep pathway leading to the house, as if he was carrying nothing heavier than a child. I thought he would have bolted into the drawing-room by the windows, but the general managed to pull him up, and then we had quite a little scene and as pleasant a dinner party as I ever had in my life. The wedding was fixed for that day week, and the general said he should *engage* the assembly rooms (as if they were not his own property!) for the breakfast, to which it was arranged that the whole of the society of the station should be invited.

We are all quite pleased, somehow, as if a piece of good fortune had befallen us, which Peter says, in his sanguine way, the marriage may really turn out to be. I am more than ever charmed with the delightful place

in which we have taken up our residence: we have a very nice house called "Alma," (all the houses here are called by *such* romantic names!) situated in the midst of a very pretty garden, which is tolerably level itself, though you have to climb a great deal to get at it. The air is so clear and cold that you may go out in it much as you would in England; and while it feels like winter it looks like summer, all the trees and flowers being in full leaf and bloom, which indeed most of them are from one year's end to the other; and the sky is of a beautiful blue such as you seldom see in the plains, where it is too light to shew much colour. The climate, in fact, is infinitely superior to that of England, and if you would come out here—but I must not allow my spirits to carry me too far. I shall be always happy to hear of your welfare, and remain,

Your affectionate Sister,

M. T.

21.

*From Miss Heloise Simpinkin, Mussoonrie, to Miss Myrtle, London.*

I HAVE great news for you this time—two marriages. One to be sure is only that of my maid Mary Jane, but we take a great interest in her and, she is now almost like one of the family. The hero of the other is my brother Clarence. The first is to come; the second is a *fait accompli*. I suppose I must congratulate my brother upon the event, though the lady is decidedly older than he is. But she is a very nice person, and is very rich, so that Clarence will now be able to pay all his bills, which have been *increasing dreadfully* of late, so much

so that papa tells me poor Clarence would have found himself in a most *painful position* but for this event. Moreover, the lady is one of those persons who are determined to rule in their own house, and will keep Clarence in order, which I fear is very much required in his case, for he has *great spirits*, and is apt, as you know, to be wild. Mary Jane has made what I must call, for her, a splendid match, that is, she will make it in a few days, everything being settled, even to the purchase of the *trousseau*.

And now I know you will ask why it is that I—but still I don't know that you should ask anything of the kind. Surely one may refuse offers if one pleases, even though the persons happen to be eligible and agreeable. Really it seems to me that one must like a person very much before one can marry him; and for my part, but what am I saying? Well, I will tell you, in the *strictest confidence* of course, that there is only one person who—well you know what I mean—and he is of a *position in life* which renders it almost impossible that we should ever meet again. And yet I cannot help hoping against hope, that there may be *some mystery* connected with him, and that something may happen some day, in fact, which will place him in a different relation towards me. But this is mere nonsense you will say, and I feel that it is, and yet I cannot bring myself to shut out all chance, and devote my life to any other person with whom I have yet been acquainted. It is only to you that I would tell this. Mamma and papa have *no idea* of my secret, nor has Clarence, nor has anybody in fact. So do not, dear, breathe it to a *living being*. I can write no more upon this painful subject, so must content myself with a very short letter.

H. S.

## 22.

*From Captain Racketts, Mussoorie, Himalaya Mountains, to  
Captain Ardent, London.*

DEAR A.—I have another yarn for you. Not a long one this time, but the main piece of news I have to tell will please you, not only because you are a friend of the Simpkin family, but because it tends to your advantage, as I think you told me that you were under some pecuniary liabilities on account of Clarence, who never has been able to manage his own affairs, and I fancy never will. However, it is most likely that he will be under no such necessity for the future, for he is at last engaged to be married to a person who will take the duty off his hands. This time, it seems, he has not been “barking up the wrong tree,” or “waking up the wrong passenger,” as the Yankees say; but I have every reason to believe—I am certain in fact—that the party is an eligible one as far as money is concerned. For the rest she is not of first-class family, but that doesn't matter. Clarence isn't either if you come to that, only one doesn't say so to him in so many words. Her history may be briefly told, as the novelists say. She was born of poor but respectable parents. Left an orphan at an early age, she was thrown upon the cold world, which she did not make too hot to hold her, as some persons do under similar circumstances, but behaved very well, and got an appointment as nursery governess in a gentleman's family. This gentleman, a rich old civilian, who had been married before; or he would not have wanted a nursery governess, made her his lawful spouse, and on his death bequeathed a fortune far be-



yond what most men manage to accumulate, even in the civil service. It is whispered that she made him marry her by taking a dose of port wine and water (under the name of laudanum) and declaring her intention to die for his sake, which so frightened him, that he asked her to live for his sake instead, which she did with great punctuality. But this is neither here nor there. Neither Clarence nor any of the family ever heard the story, which may be true or may be false. I believe she will be a very good match. She is not quite young certainly, but is comely and very well preserved, and with her money might marry almost anybody she pleased. She is one of the latest arrivals here for the season, and has already taken a great fancy for Clarence, which he has met more than half way, as you may suppose. He really seems to be quite in earnest, and it is time that he was, for he is engaged if ever man was. The thing is to be done on the quiet, however. Clarence is not afraid of his family, who would be glad to see him so well provided for; but the lady is desperately modest (a Widow Maloneish kind of shyness I take it) of making another marriage before all the world, and insists upon an elopement. So it is agreed that they are to run away quietly down to the valley, and there be united as soon as the license can be got from Calcutta. As nobody is likely to pursue them of course the elopement will be deprived of half its charm; but both are quite reconciled to the neglect, and I have no doubt that events will turn out as if made to order. I am to be best man of course, and Clarence will be under a perpetual obligation to me for helping him to pay his debts.

Yours sincerely.

C. R.

## 23.

*From the same to the same.*

Here is another budget of news for you, connected with the Simpkin family, with a little in addition about myself. Yesterday was most certainly an eventful day in our annals. It was the wedding-day of the old general and Miss Mary Jane Patten, and great were the preparations made for the event. Everybody had been invited, as was arranged, and Fortune made every show of smiling upon the happy pair. But very often we find that Fortune seems to smile when she only grins. But I must not anticipate.

All the more intimate friends of the family assembled at the Simpkins' to accompany them to church, where the remainder were to join. Radiant was the appearance of the party as you may suppose. The master of the house was imposing and important in make up and manner, as befitted the solemnity of the occasion. His mistress surpassed herself in sumptuousness of toilette, and I believe entertained the firm belief that she looked like a peeress in her own right. Miss Heloise was a wonderfully successful exhibition, and the bride herself looked so well, that one could scarcely believe her to be the same Mary Jane who came out with us from Europe. The girl in fact—but I must not anticipate.

Well, to church the whole party proceeded, and there were assembled the remainder of the "everybody" of the place, including of course the happy bridegroom, who wore an old uniform and a new wig, the latter being so obliging as to take off some fifteen or twenty years from his age. The padre and all the rest were there in fact, and the ceremony was just about to begin, when—

I say the ceremony was only *'about* to begin. The event which I have now to relate would be more dramatic if I had said that the ceremony had arrived at that point when the padre tells the company, if they have anything to say against the match to say it, or for ever after, &c. But I cannot sacrifice truth even for the sake of effect. The truth is this:—Mary Jane was just taking her place, and the general was just being pushed into his, neither of them knowing exactly where they were, I think, and the lady beginning to make portentous appeals to a bottle of salts, when, what do you think?

A noise was heard of a new arrival. A palankeen had stopped at the door, not a *jam-pan* such as are ordinarily in use, but a kind of litter not unlike a bird-cage, covered with a canopy of red cloth, carefully curtained all round, so as to conceal the occupant. Out of this stepped a lady, who, with a solitary attendant of the same sex, made her way up the aisle. The sensation was tremendous, not so much because the new comer was a lady, but because she was a native lady. Yes, she was a native, on my honour. She was veiled, but not so closely as altogether to conceal her face, which appeared to be of a bright nut colour. Her eyes were large, black, and of an almond shape, and she appeared to have a pretty gold ornament let into one side of her nose. In this feature also was a large ring of the same material, and this caught in the veil with which she made an apparent attempt to conceal her countenance, and so enabled us to have a better view of her than we should otherwise have done. Her costume, in addition to the veil or *chudder*, which reached nearly to her feet, consisted of a very diminutive bodice, and a very open jacket over that, of some rich silk embroidered with

gold. There was a kind of vest also inside of some gauzy material. Below, her attire consisted of a pair of gauze pantaloons, with a broad edging of gold, with some signs of another pair under them of heavier material. She wore no shoes, her slippers being carried by her attendant, along with a hookah which she appeared to have just been smoking. Her bare feet, whose nails were tipped with a dye of some kind, pattered on the pavement as she tripped along, and the tinkling of the bangles which she wore upon her ankles kept time to her movements. I mention all these matters so that you may form an idea of the sensation which her presence created in the church.

Of course the ceremony was stopped, and all eyes were turned upon the unexpected visitor, who responded to the general curiosity only by making a show of drawing her *chudder* more closely over her face. Mary Jane did not wait for any explanation, but fainted off with the usual punctuality of her sex. The general looked utterly confounded and overwhelmed, but said nothing until the lady marched straight to his front and drew aside her veil, when he ejaculated "By Jove!" in a voice something like that of the late Mr. O. Smith, at the Adelphi, when he used to take leave of the rightful heir just before being carried off to execution.

To make a long story short, I will only give you a general idea of the explanation that followed. The *beebee*, it seems, was the general's wife whom he had left behind him at Delhi when he had to run from that place in 1857, and whom I really believe he thought to be dead. Like some other officers of the old school in India, he had fallen into a native alliance instead of a European one, and the lady in the pantaloons was no less his spouse than the respectable Mrs. Simpkin is

the spouse of her equally respectable husband. What was to be done? Everybody asked the question of everybody else, and nobody answered. What was *not* to be done, however, was more clear. The marriage could not be ; so there was nothing for it but for everybody to go home again. The general, to do him justice, did not evince any great horror at taking his lady back to his bosom ; he was more ashamed of being made the hero of the scene than of anything else. Nor, indeed, did there seem any reason why an admirer of oriental ladies should not be tolerably well contented. Although not in her first youth the *beebee* appeared to be not without beauty, and from her garb and bearing one might suppose her to be not without rank. At any rate the general put her into her palankeen with a very good grace, and dismissed her, I fancy, to his own dwelling. Returning then to Mary Jane, whom curiosity had by this time restored to her senses, he made his apologies with as little embarrassment as could be expected, though he was considerably fluttered it must be confessed. As for Mary Jane, she was more composed than might have been anticipated, though also in a flutter which rendered the bottle of salts absolutely necessary. But I could not but fancy that she was somewhat relieved when the general told Mr. Simpkin quietly, though in her hearing, that the settlement which he had made upon her—a very handsome one—he could not think of withdrawing, but hoped that she would retain.

Affairs were thus arranged more satisfactorily than we could have hoped under the circumstances ; so well indeed, that Mr. Simpkin, in a brief address to the company, expressed his opinion that although there had been no wedding, that was no reason why there should

be no breakfast; he hoped, therefore, that everybody would return to that meal as previously arranged. Of course everybody said they would, with the exception of the general, restrained perhaps by delicacy, perhaps by a wish to rejoin the *beebe* of his earlier affections. We all said good bye to him, therefore, and made our way to the Assembly Rooms, and here another surprise (for some of us) was in waiting.

Clarence and his bride had just returned from their run-away trip, and the prodigal now sought the pardon of his parents, who, knowing the prudent nature of the match beforehand, gave their blessing to the pair with remarkable alacrity. There was no occasion for the fatted calf to be killed; for it was all ready laid out in the shape of "every delicacy of the season."

We were not destined, however, to sit down without another little adventure, involving so curious a coincidence, that had it occurred in a novel or a play, we should have declared it unnatural and "far fetched." Just as we were proceeding to the refreshment room a native servant made his *salaam* to Mr. Simpkin, and told him that the "chota magistrate sahib," had just arrived. This was another guest added to our number, the assistant magistrate of the station, who had been but just appointed, but who had left a card upon the Simpkins the day before, in time to receive an invitation. He was not known by sight to Mr. Simpkin, who, however, welcomed him with the lofty courtesy of the British gentleman, not apparently taking much notice of his appearance. But when the old gentleman turned round to present him to his wife and daughter it was plain that he was no stranger.

Heloise, who was fortunately in the vicinity of a sofa sunk upon that article of furniture, and if she did

not faint, as Mary Jane had done, appearances were very much in her favor.

Mrs. Simpkin appeared struck with astonishment, but soon recovered herself.

"You remember Mr. Dulcimer, Peter," she said with great dignity, turning to her husband.

"Dulcimer! of course I do," said that gentleman; then appearing to recollect farther, he looked as if he did not quite know whether he ought to be cordial or cold to his guest. Mr. Dulcimer was fortunately able to come to his own assistance; and after a short colloquy in a corner, the two returned, to the somewhat puzzled company, radiant with smiles and laughing heartily as if at some brilliant joke. There was no public explanation upon the point, but it "turned out" that this young man, whom I remembered presently myself, had come out from England by the same mail as the Simpkin family, with whom he had struck up a great friendship, until they took a fancy into their heads that he was an assistant at a milliner's shop, upon which they dropped him. The misconception, it seems, was caused by a hoax which he had played off upon the ladies, by pretending, upon one occasion, to belong to the establishment over which he lodged—whether in mere joke or with any deeper purpose I will not pretend to say. However, he seemed to be on excellent terms now with Miss Heloise in particular; and in such good spirits was everybody, that I should think a happier tiffin party than ours never spoiled their dinner. As for myself, I sat by the disappointed bride and did my best to console her, succeeding so well that you need not be surprised should you hear that she is not unlikely to have a husband after all.

Your sincere friend,

J. R.

## 24.

*From Peter Simpkin, Esq., Mussoorie, to Captain Ardent, London.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am glad to be able to inform you that my speculation here has answered exceedingly well, and that if it is still worth your while to act as my London agent I shall be very happy to continue our connexion on more advantageous terms. \* \* \* I consider myself always indebted to you for the valuable advice which induced me to come out to this beautiful spot, which nothing but business in England shall induce me to quit. The climate of the hills is far finer than that of any part of the British Isles, and the opportunities for the advantageous employment of capital far beyond my expectations. I would not advise the labouring classes to come to India, as they go to Australia, but for a man with a little money it is a country where, with sobriety and industry (and some people manage without either), he may be almost certain to make a fortune. Colonization, in the ordinary sense of the word, may be considered impossible even if it were desirable; but there is no reason on earth why as many of our countrymen should not settle here as can command respectable positions; who can employ themselves in commerce, or follow agricultural or manufacturing pursuits. We do not want European labour, which can never compete with native labour in this climate; but we want European capital, European energy, and European honesty. I find that tea is at



present one of the best speculations going ; and cotton will be just as good directly there is an assured demand for it in England. There is no real ground for the prejudice against Indian cotton which has for so long prevailed in the home market. The finest kinds can be produced here, with care, as in the Southern States of America. It is in the preparation of the article that the difference consists ; and this, by the application of the European elements to which I have alluded above, may be made as perfect as in any other country. I am happy to say that the late policy of the government has been so much in favour of the British settler, that if he is unhappy for the future it will be only because he has nothing to complain of. The privilege of holding land in fee simple and of redeeming the land-tax by a capital payment are most valuable acquisitions, and the extension of the perpetual settlement, will be also productive of great benefit to all classes in this country. I look forward, indeed, to a splendid future for India, and I am glad to see one element of obstruction fast disappearing. I allude to the "antagonism of race." This has been productive of a great deal of harm hitherto. It is the fashion to abuse the old Company, but after all \* \* \* [here Mr. Simpkin, apparently forgetting his liberal sentiments, falls into a series of contradictory reflections with which we will not trouble the reader. He continues as follows.]—

In conclusion I will briefly touch upon domestic matters. We have had three marriages here lately : first, that of my son, who is allied to a widow lady of a very eligible description, who has plenty of money for both of them, but keeps it entirely under her own control. Clarence, I am happy to say, cannot sign a cheque. He was a little chafed at the restriction at first, but submits

now with much docility, and the attention which he pays his wife is quite gratifying to behold. He goes nowhere without her, except occasionally to the club, from which I understand that he returns at very reasonable hours ; he never bets, and does nothing with horses except ride them ; at cards and billiards he may now and then indulge, but only for nominal stakes. He is quite another person in fact, so much so that his friends would scarcely know him—indeed some of them don't in consequence, for Shabrack, Busby, the Honorable Dolman, and the others of his former set, finding that they can get nothing more out of him, have avoided his society—a proceeding which has opened his eyes as to the sincerity of their friendship.

The next marriage on my list is that of my daughter. Her husband is the assistant magistrate of this place—a gentleman of great talent, who is certain to rise to the highest positions in the service. The attachment, I find, is of old standing, and the match may most certainly be pronounced a happy one.

Miss Mary Jane Patten, once a domestic servant in our establishment, has also formed a matrimonial alliance with no less a person than our mutual friend Racketts, who has been a most useful friend to us, and whom I am glad to find so well settled in life. For Mary Jane, I should tell you, through an accident which I need not detail, has come into a very nice little fortune which Racketts is very glad to divide with her. He has bought a four anna share out of it in my tea concern, and is rapidly becoming a rich man.

Thus you see, my dear sir, we are all very comfortably settled here ; and I can assure you that we have no hankering after the old country, where we had but few friends and were comparatively small people. In

the delicious climate in which we are now living, my wife and I get younger every day ; and we feel as if we were destined to realize the end of the people in the story books, and "live very happy ever after."

I am, yours faithfully,

P. SIMPKIN.

THE END OF VOL I.





